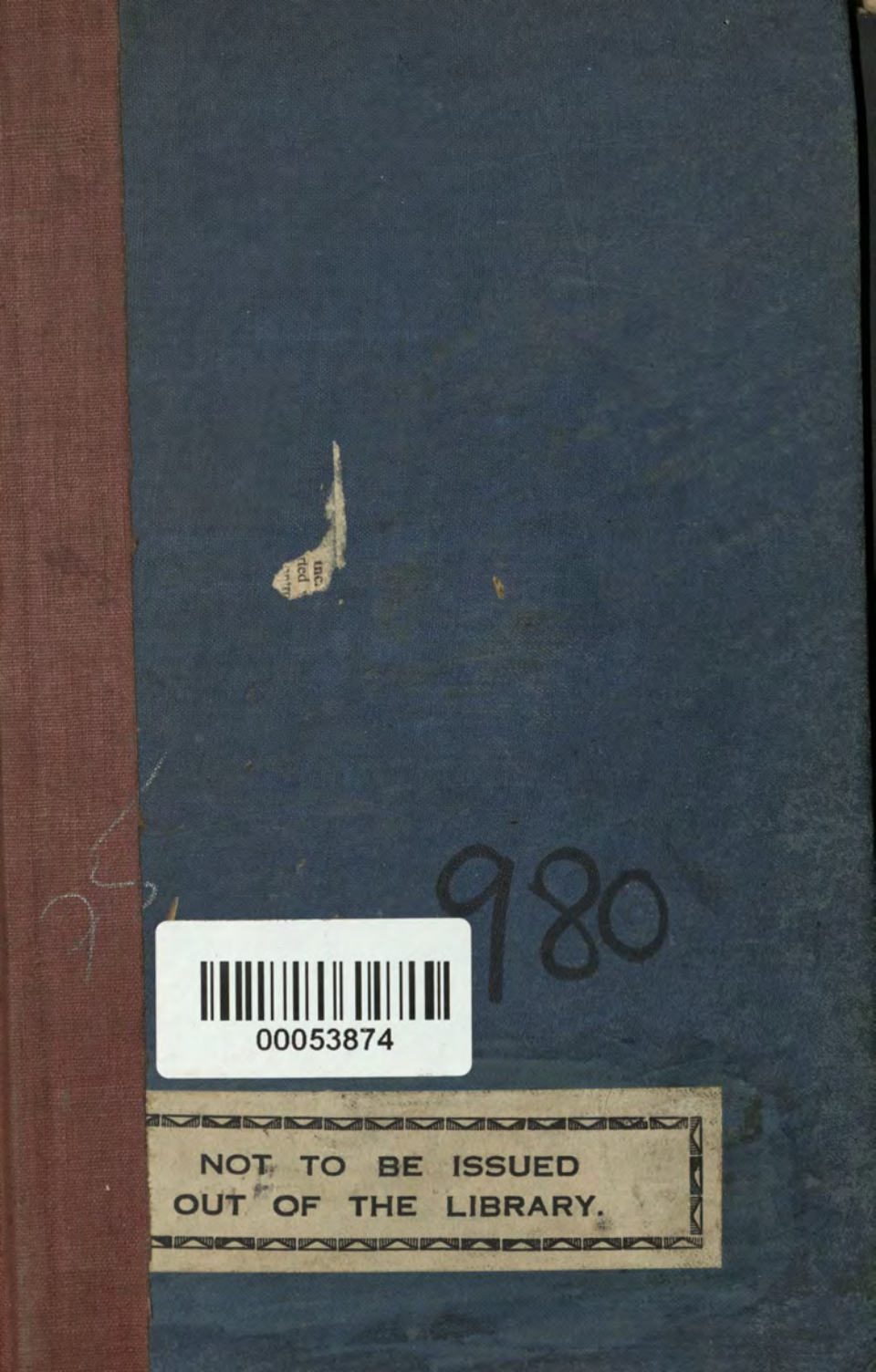
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# HISTORY OF THE JEWS.

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# HISTORY OF THE JEWS,

## FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY.

BY

PROFESSOR H. GRAETZ.

Specially Revised for this English Edition by the Author.

53874

EDITED AND IN PART TRANSLATED BY BELLA LÖWY.

VOL. I.

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# PREFACE.

It is a matter of especial satisfaction to me that my work, "The History of the Jews, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day," should be rendered accessible to the English reading public in a compact form and by means of an adequate translation; for in countries where English is spoken, books are not only bought, bound, and placed in libraries, but are also read, taken to heart, and acted upon. It is therefore to be expected that the English-speaking people, which has never disregarded but has at all times recognised and appreciated the peculiar character of the Jewish race, will feel an increased sympathy for it, on reading the alternations of its sublime and tragical history.

English readers, to whom the forefathers of the Jews of to-day—the patriarchs, heroes, and men of God—are familiar characters, will the better understand the miracle which is exhibited in the history of the Jews during three thousand years. The continuance of the Jewish race until the present

day is a marvel not to be overlooked even by those who deny the existence of miracles, and who only see in the most astounding events, both natural and preternatural, the logical results of cause and effect. Here we observe a phenomenon, which has developed and asserted itself in spite of all laws of nature, and we behold a culture which, notwithstanding unspeakable hostility against its exponents, has nevertheless profoundly modified the organism of nations.

It is the heartfelt aspiration of the author that this historical work, in its English garb, may attain its object by putting an end to the hostile bearing against the Jewish race, so that it may no longer be begrudged the peculiar sphere whereto it has been predestined through the events and sorrows of thousands of years, and that it may be permitted to fulfil its appointed mission without molestation.

This translation, in five volumes, is not a mere excerpt of my "Geschichte der Juden" (like my "Volksthümliche Geschichte der Juden"), but a condensed reproduction of the entire eleven volumes. But the footnotes have been omitted, so as to render the present work less voluminous for the general reader. Historical students are

usually acquainted with the German language, and can read the notes in the original.

In this English edition the "History of the Present Day" is brought down to 1870, whilst the original only goes as far as the memorable events of 1848. The last volume will contain a survey of the entire history of the Jewish nation, together with a comprehensive index of names and events.

In conclusion, I cannot refrain from expressing my gratitude to one, whose life-task it is to further with rare generosity all humane and intellectual interests, and who has caused this translation to be made and published. At the risk of wounding his modesty, I must mention, as the Mæcenas of this work, Mr. Frederick D. Mocatta, whose name is a household word in every Jewish circle.

H. GRAETZ.

BRESLAU, *January*, 1891.

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To the foregoing words of the author I merely wish to add, that while the first volume, as far as the period of the Hasmonæans, has been translated by me, the other volumes have for the greater

part "been done into English by various hands," and have afterwards been revised and edited by me.

My cordial thanks are due to Mr. Israel Abrahams, whose scholarly co-operation has enabled me to cope with the difficulties presented by Hebrew and Jewish names and technicalities.

BELLA LOWY.

LONDON, *January*, 1891.

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# HISTORY OF THE JEWS.

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### THE EARLIEST PERIOD.

The Original Inhabitants of Canaan—Gigantic Anakim and Rephaim—The Phœnicians—Israel's Claim to Canaan—The Patriarchs—Hereditary Law—Emigration to Egypt—Tribal Union—Bright and Dark Sides of the Egyptians—Moses, Aaron and Miriam—The Prophetic Sage—Call of Moses as Deliverer—Opposition—Exodus from Egypt—Passage of the Red Sea—Wanderings in the Desert—Revelation on Mount Sinai—The Decalogue—Relapse—Concessions—Crisis—Circuitous Wanderings—Victories over Populations of Canaan, on Trans-Jordanic Side—Commencements of Hebrew Poetry—Death of Moses.

It was on a spring day that some pastoral tribes passed across the Jordan into a strip of land which can only be regarded as an extended coast line of the Mediterranean. This was the land of *Canaan*, subsequently called *Palestine*. The crossing of the Jordan and the entry into this territory were destined to become of the utmost importance to mankind. The land of which the shepherd tribes possessed themselves became the arena of great events, so enduring and important in their results, that the country in which they took place became known as the *Holy Land*. Distant nations had no conception that the entry of the *Hebrew* or *Israelite* tribes into the land of Canaan would have such momentous consequences. Even the inhabitants of Palestine were far from recognising in this invasion an occurrence fraught with vital significance to themselves.

At the time when the Hebrews occupied this territory it was inhabited by tribes and peoples dissimilar in descent and pursuits. The primary place was held by the aborigines, the *Anakim* and *Rephaim*, a powerful race of giants. Tradition represents them as the descendants of that unruly and overbearing race which, in primæval times, attempted to storm the heavens. For this rebellious attempt they had been doomed to ignominious destruction.

Their reputed descendants, the powerful natives of the country—who by some of the ancient nations were called *Emim*, "terrible men"—were unable to maintain themselves; notwithstanding their imposing figures, they were destroyed by races of inferior stature. The rest were obliged to migrate to the East-Jordanic lands, to the south, and also to the south-west of the West-Jordanic region. This remnant of the *Anakim* filled the Israelite spies with such abject terror that they rendered the entire nation afraid of ever obtaining possession of the country. This gave rise to the proverb, "Who can stand before the children of Anak?" "We were," said the spies, "in our own eyes as grasshoppers, and so we appeared unto them." These giants were eventually overcome by the Israelite dwarfs.

Another group of inhabitants which had settled in the land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan was that of the *Canaanites*, whom the Greeks called Phœnicians. These Phœnicians appear to have pursued the same employment in their new country as they had followed on the banks of the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf. Their chief pursuits were navigation and commerce. The position which they had selected was eminently favourable to their daring expeditions. The great ocean, forming a strait at the Pillars of Hercules, and separating Europe from Africa, as the Mediterra-

nean Sea, has here its extreme limit. At the foot of the snow-topped Lebanon and its spurs, commodious inlets formed natural harbours that required but little improvement at the hand of man. On this seaboard the Canaanites built the town of Sidon, situated on a prominent crag which overhangs the sea. They afterwards built, on a small rocky island, the port of Tyre (Tor, which subsequently became celebrated); they also built Aradus to the north of Sidon, and Akko (Acre) to the south of Tyre. The neighbouring forests of the Lebanon and the Anti-Lebanon supplied them with lofty cedars and strong cypresses for ships. The Canaanites, who became the first mercantile nation in the world, owed much of their success to the advantage of finding on their coast various species of the murex (*Tolaat shani*), from the fluid of which was obtained a most brilliant and widely celebrated purple dye. The beautiful white sand of the river Belus, near Acre, supplied fine glass, an article which was likewise in much request in the Old World. The wealth of the country lay in the sands of the sea shore. The Canaanites, on account of their extensive trade, required and introduced at an early period a convenient form of writing, and their alphabet, the Phœnician, became the model for the alphabets of ancient and modern nations. In a word, the narrow belt of land between the Mediterranean and Mount Lebanon, with its spurs, became one of the most important points on the face of the globe. Through the peaceful pursuits of commerce they were brought into contact with remote nations, who were gradually aroused from a state of inactivity. The Canaanites became subdivided into the small nationalities of Amorites, Hittites, Hivites, and Perizzites. The Jebusites, who inhabited this district were of minor importance; they dwelt on the tract of land which afterwards became the site for the city of Jerusalem. Of

still less account were the Girgashites, who had no fixed residence. All these names would have remained unknown had not the Israelites entered the land.

But this people had not taken a footing in the country with the mere object of finding pasture-land for their flocks; their pretensions were far greater. Chief of all, they claimed as their patrimony the land where the graves of their forefathers were situated. The first patriarch, Abraham, who had emigrated from Aram, on the borders of the Euphrates, had, after many wanderings through the country, acquired in Hebron, as an hereditary burial-place, the Cave of Machpelah, or the "Double Cave," together with the adjoining field and trees. There his wife Sarah had been interred, then he himself, and after him his son, the patriarch, Isaac.

The third patriarch, Jacob, after many vicissitudes and wanderings, had purchased a plot of land near Shechem, and had taken that important city "with his sword and with his bow." The city was in the very heart of the territory of the Hivites, and its capture had taken place in consequence of a breach of peace, through the abduction and dishonour of Jacob's daughter. The land was henceforth regarded as the property of the patriarch, and he only reluctantly quitted it at the outbreak of a famine, in order to proceed to Egypt, where corn was plentiful. On his deathbed, Jacob impressed upon his sons that they should deposit his remains in the family tomb of the "Double Cave." Not alone did Canaan contain the graves of the three patriarchs, but also the altars which they had erected and named in various places, in honour of the Deity whom they worshipped. The Israelites were therefore firmly convinced that they had a right to the exclusive possession of the land. These claims derived further strength from the right of hereditary transmission.

The patriarchs had left to their descendants as a sacred bequest the tradition that the Deity, whom they had been the first to recognise, had repeatedly and indubitably, though only in visions, promised them this land as their possession, not merely for the sake of showing them favour, but as the means of attaining to a higher degree of culture. This culture would pre-eminently consist in Abraham's doctrine of a purer belief in the *One God*, whose nature differed essentially from that of the gods whom the various nations represented in the shape of idols and by means of other senseless conceptions. The higher recognition of the Deity was designed to lead Abraham's posterity to the practice of justice towards all men, in contradistinction to the injustice universally prevailing in those days. It was affirmed that this higher culture was ordained by the Almighty" as "the way of God," and that as such it should be transmitted by the patriarchs to their families as a bequest and as a subject of hereditary instruction. They also received the promise that through their posterity, as the faithful guardians of this teaching, all nations of the earth should be blessed, and should participate in this intellectual advancement of Israel; and that with this same object the land of Canaan had been allotted to Israel, as especially adapted for the purposes of the hereditary law. Hence it was that the Israelites, while in a foreign country, felt an irrepressible yearning for their ancestral land. Their forefathers had impressed them with the hope that, though some of their generations would sojourn in a land which was not their own, a time would surely come when Israel should return to that land which was the resting-place of their patriarchs, and where the patriarchal altars had been erected and consecrated. This promise became identified with all their positive expectations, and with their conviction that the acquisition of Canaan was secured to them as

a reward for performing the duties of worshipping the God of their fathers, and for observing the ways of justice and righteousness. The nature of this worship and "the way of justice" was not clearly defined, nor did they require such a definition. The lives of the patriarchs, as commemorated by posterity, served as a sufficient illustration of the family law. Abraham was especially held up as a model of human excellence. Differing from other nations who *worshipped* their primæval ancestors, his descendants did not revere him as a performer of marvellous deeds, nor as one exalted to the eminent degree of a god or a demi-god. Not as a warrior and a conqueror did he live in the memory of his descendants, but as a self-denying, God-fearing man, who joined true simplicity and faith to nobleness in thought and in action. According to their conception, Abraham the Hebrew, although born of idolatrous parents in Aram, on the other side of the Euphrates, and although brought up amidst idolatrous associations, had obeyed the voice which revealed to him a higher God, and had separated himself from those around him. When disputes arose, he did not obstinately insist upon his claims, but renounced his rights for the sake of living at peace with his fellow-men. So hospitable was he, that he would go forth to invite the passing wayfarers, and he delighted in entertaining them. He interceded for the sinners of Sodom and the neighbouring cities, when their cruel and inhuman acts had brought on them the punishment of Heaven; and he prayed that they might be spared for the sake of any few righteous men amongst them.

These and other remembrances of his peace-loving and generous disposition, of his self-abnegation, and of his submission to God, were cherished by his descendants, together with the conviction that such a line of conduct was agreeable to the

God of their fathers; that for the sake of these virtues God had protected Abraham, as well as his son and his grandson, because the two latter had followed the example of their predecessor. This belief that God especially protects the virtuous, the just, and the good, was fully confirmed in the life of the patriarch Jacob, to whom the further name of ISRAEL was given. His life had been short and toilsome, but the God of his fathers had delivered him from all his sorrows. Such remembrances of ancestral piety were retained by the sons of Israel, and such family traditions served to supplement and illustrate their hereditary law.

The growth of Israel as a distinct race commenced amidst extraordinary circumstances. The beginning of this people bore but very slight resemblance to the origin of other nations. Israel as a people arose amidst peculiar surroundings in the land of Goshen, a territory situated in the extreme north of Egypt, near the borders of Palestine. The Israelites were not at once moulded into a nation, but consisted of twelve loosely connected shepherd tribes.

These tribes led a simple life in the land of Goshen. The elders (*Zekenim*) of the families, who acted as their chiefs, were consulted on all important occasions. They had no supreme chieftain, nor did they owe allegiance to the Egyptian kings; and thus they habitually enjoyed the freedom of a republic, in which each tribal section was enabled to preserve its independence without falling into subjection or serfdom. Although they did not become intermixed with the ancient Egyptians, who in fact had an aversion to shepherds—perhaps on account of the oppression they had in former ages endured from such shepherds (the Hyksos)—yet opportunities for contact and mutual communication could not be wanting. Some families of Israel had abandoned their pastoral pur-

suits, and devoted themselves to agriculture or industrial occupations, and were therefore brought into connection with the inhabitants of towns. It seems that the members of the tribe of Ephraim stood in closer social contact with the original inhabitants. This intercourse had a favourable influence upon the Israelites.

The Egyptians had already gone through a history of a thousand years, and attained to a high degree of culture. Their kings, or Pharaohs, had already built populous cities, and erected colossal edifices, temples, pyramids and mausoleums. Their priests had acquired a certain degree of perfection in such arts and technical accomplishments as were suited to the requirements of the country, as for example, architecture and hydraulic constructions, the kindred science of geometry, the art of medicine, and the mystery of embalming for the perpetual preservation of the remains of the departed; also the artistic working of objects in gold, silver, and precious stones, in order to satisfy the luxurious demands of the kings. They also knew the art of sculpture and the use of pigments. They studied chronology, together with astronomy, which was suggested by the periodical overflow of the Nile. The all-important art of writing had been invented and perfected by the Egyptian priests. They first used stones and metals to commemorate the renown of their monarchs; and they afterwards employed the fibre of the papyrus shrub, which was originally marked with clumsy figures and subsequently with ingeniously drawn symbols. Of these several attainments the Israelites seem to have acquired some notion. The members of the destitute tribe of Levi in particular, being unencumbered by pastoral service or by landed possessions, appear to have learnt from the Egyptian priests the art of writing. Owing to their superior knowledge, they were

treated by the other tribes as the sacerdotal class, and hence they held, even in Egypt, the privileged distinction of their priestly position.

The residence of the Israelites in Egypt was of great advantage to them. It raised them, or at least a portion of them, from a rude state of nature to a higher grade of culture. But what they gained on the one hand, they lost on the other; and in spite of their arts and accomplishments, they would in time have fallen into a more abject condition. Amongst no people which had advanced beyond the first stage of Fetish worship, had idolatry assumed such a hideous development, or so mischievously tainted the habits, as was the case with the Egyptians. By combining and intermingling the gods of the various districts, they had established a complete system of polytheism. As a matter of course they worshipped goddesses as well as gods. What made the mythology of the Egyptians especially repulsive, was the fact that they placed the deified objects of their adoration, from whom they expected help, far below the level of human beings.

They endowed their gods with the shape of animals, and worshipped the inferior creatures as divine powers. Ammon, their chief god, was represented with ram's horns, the goddess Pecht (Pacht) with a cat's head, and Hathor (Athyr), the goddess of licentiousness, with a cow's head. Osiris, who was worshipped throughout Egypt, was represented in a most loathsome and revolting image, and the universally honoured Isis was often pictured with a cow's head. Animals being scarce in the Nile region, great value was attached to their preservation, and they received divine homage. Such honours were paid to the black bull *Apis* (*Abir*) in Memphis, to the white bull *Mnevis* in Heliopolis, to the lascivious goats, to dogs, and especially to cats; also to birds, snakes, and even mice. The

killing of a sacred bull or cat was more severely punished than the murder of a human being.

This abominable idolatry was daily witnessed by the Israelites. The consequences of such perversions were sufficiently deplorable. Men who invested their gods with the shape of animals, sank down to the level of beasts, and were treated as such by the kings and by persons of the higher castes—the priests and soldiers. Humanity was contemned; no regard was paid to the freedom of the subjects, and still less to that of strangers. The Pharaohs claimed to be descended from the gods, and were worshipped as such even during their lifetime. The entire land with its population was owned by them. It was a mere act of grace on their part that they granted a portion of the territory to cultivators of the soil.

Egypt, in fact, was not peopled by an independent nation, but by bondsmen. Hundreds of thousands were forced to take part in compulsory labour for the erection of the colossal temples and pyramids. The Egyptian priests were worthy of such kings and gods. Cruelly as the Pharaohs harassed their subjects with hard labour, the priests continued to declare that the kings were demi-gods. Under the weight of this oppression the people became devoid of all human dignity, and submitted to the vilest bondage without ever attempting to relieve themselves from the galling yoke. The repulsive idolatry then prevailing in Egypt had yet further pernicious consequences. The people lost the idea of chastity, after they had placed the brute creation on an equality with their deities. Unspeakable offences in the use of animals had become of daily occurrence, and entailed neither punishment nor disgrace. The gods being depicted in unchaste positions, there appeared to be no need for human beings to be better than the gods. No example is more contagious and seductive than folly and sin. The

Israelites, especially those who were brought into closer contact with the Egyptians, gradually adopted idolatrous perversions, and abandoned themselves to unbridled license. This state of things was aggravated by a new system of persecution. During a long period, the Israelites residing in the Land of Goshen had been left unmolested, they having been looked upon as roving shepherds who would not permanently settle in Egypt. But when decades and even a century had passed by, and they still remained in the land and continued to increase in numbers, the council of the king begrudged them the state of freedom which was denied to the Egyptians themselves. The court now feared that these shepherd tribes, which had become so numerous in Goshen, might assume a warlike attitude towards Egypt. To avoid this danger, the Israelites were declared to be bondsmen, and were compelled to perform forced labour. To effect a rapid decrease in their numbers, the king commanded that the male infants of the Israelites should be drowned in the Nile or in some of the canals, and that only the female infants should be spared. The Israelites, formerly free in the land of Goshen, were now kept "in a house of bondage," "in an iron furnace"; here it was to be proved whether they would conform to their hereditary law, or follow strange gods.

The greater part of the tribes could not stand this trial. They had a dim knowledge that the God of their fathers was a being very different from the Egyptian idols; but even this knowledge seemed to decrease from day to day. Love of imitation, sore oppression, and daily misery made them obtuse, and obscured the faint light of their hereditary law. The enslaved labourers did not know what to think of an unseen God who only lived in their memories. Like their masters, the Egyptians, they now lifted their eyes to the visible gods who showed them-

selves so merciful and propitious to Israel's tormentors. They directed their prayers to the bovine god Apis, whom they called *Abir*,[1] and they also offered to the he-goats.[2] The daughter of Israel, growing up to womanhood, sacrificed her virtue, and abandoned herself to the Egyptians.[3] It was probably thought that, in the images of the grass-eating animal, honour was paid to the god of the patriarchs. When the intellect is on a wrong track where are the limits for its imaginings? The Israelites would have succumbed to coarse sensual idolatry and to Egyptian vice, like many other nations who had come under the influence of the people of the land of Ham, had not two brothers and their sister—the instruments of a higher Spirit—aroused them and drawn them out of their lethargy. These were MOSES, AARON and MIRIAM.[4] In what did the greatness of this triad consist? What intellectual powers led them to undertake their work of redemption, the elevating and liberating effect of which was intended to range far beyond their own times? Past ages have left us but few characteristic traits of Moses, and barely any of his brother and sister, which could enable us to comprehend, from a human point of view, how they rose step by step from the obscurity of an infant stage to the height of far-seeing mental prophecy, and by what means they rendered themselves worthy of their exalted mission. The brother prophets belonged to that tribe which, through its superior knowledge, was regarded as the sacerdotal tribe, namely, the tribe of Levi. This tribe, or at least this family, doubtless preserved the memorial of the patriarchs, and of the

[1] In Hebrew the word *Abir* means *bull, mighty*, and hence *God*. It is connected with the Egyptian *abr* (a bull), from which *Apis* is derived. Conf. Jeremiah xlvi. 15.

[2] Levit. xvii. 7. The sending of the scape-goat to Azazel marked the abomination in which this lascivious cult was held.

[3] Conf. Ezekiel xxiii. 7, 8.

[4] Micah vi. 7, mentions also Miriam, like her brothers, as a deliverer.

law of the God of their fathers, and had accordingly kept itself aloof from Egyptian idolatry and Egyptian horrors.

Thus it was that Aaron, the elder brother, as also Moses and Miriam, had grown up in an atmosphere of greater moral and religious purity. Of Moses the historical records relate that after his birth his mother kept him concealed during three months, to evade the royal command, and protect him from death in the waters of the Nile. There is no doubt that the youthful Moses was well acquainted with Pharaoh's court at Memphis or Tanis (Zoan). Gifted with an active intellect, he had an opportunity of acquiring the knowledge that was to be learnt in Egypt, and by his personal and intellectual qualities he won the affections of all hearts. But even more than by these qualities, he was distinguished by his gentleness and modesty. "Moses was the meekest of men," is the only praise which the historical records have bestowed upon him. He is not praised for heroism or warlike deeds, but for unselfishness and self-abnegation.

Influenced by the ancient teaching, that the God of Abraham loved righteousness, he must have been repelled by the baseless idolatry of animal worship, and by the social and moral wrongs which then were rife. Shameless vice, the bondage of a whole people under kings and priests, the inequality of castes, the treatment of human beings as though they were beasts, or inferior to beasts, the spirit of slavery, all these evils he recognised in their full destructive force, and he perceived that the prevailing debasement had defiled his brethren. Moses was the open antagonist of injustice. It grieved him sorely that Israel's sons were subjected to slavery, and were daily exposed to ill-treatment by the lowest of the Egyptians. One day when he saw an Egyptian unjustly beating a

Hebrew, his passion overcame his self-control, and he punished the offender. Fearing discovery, he fled from Egypt into the desert, and halted at an oasis in the neighbourhood of Mount Sinai, where the Kenites, an offshoot of the tribe of Midianites, were dwelling. Here, as in Egypt, he witnessed oppression and wrong-doing, and here also he opposed it with zeal. He gave his aid to feeble shepherdesses. By such action he came into contact with their grateful father, the priest or elder of the tribe of the Midianites, and he married Zipporah, the daughter of that priest.

His employment in Midian was that of a shepherd. He selected fertile grazing plots for the herds of Reuel, his father-in-law, between the Red Sea and the mountain lands. In this solitude the prophetic spirit came upon him. What is the meaning of this prophetic spirit? Until now even those who have searched the secrets of the world, or the secrets of the soul in its grasp of the universe, even they can give of it only a faint notion, but no distinct account. The inner life of man has depths which have remained inscrutable for the keenest researches of the investigator. It is however undeniable that the human mind can without help from the senses, cast a far-seeing glance into the enigmatic chains of events, and into the combined display of existing forces. By means of an undisclosed faculty of the soul, man has discovered truths which are not within the reach of the senses. The organs of the senses can only confirm or rectify the truths already elicited. They cannot discover them. By means of the truths brought to light by that inexplicable power of the soul, man has learned to know nature and to make its forces subservient to his will. These facts attest that the power of the soul owns properties which go beyond the ken of the senses and transcend the skilled faculties of human reason. Such properties lift the veil of the dim future, for

the purpose of discovering higher truths concerning the moral conduct of man; they are even capable of beholding a something of that mysterious Being who has formed and who maintains the universe and the combined action of all its forces. A soul devoted to mundane matters and to selfishness can never attain to this degree of perfection. But should not a soul which is untouched by selfishness, undisturbed by low desires and passions, unsoiled by profanity and the stains of every-day life, a soul which is completely merged in the Deity and in a longing for moral superiority,—should not such a soul be capable of beholding a revelation of religious and moral truths?

During successive centuries of Israel's history there arose pure-minded men, who unquestionably could look far into the future, and who received and imparted revelations concerning God and the holiness of life. This is an historical fact which will stand any test. A succession of prophets predicted the future destiny of the Israelites and of other nations, and these predictions have been verified by fulfilment. These prophets placed the son of Amram as first on the list of men to whom a revelation was vouchsafed, and high above themselves, because his predictions were clearer and more positive. They recognised in Moses not only the first, but also the greatest of prophets; and they considered their prophetic spirit as a mere reflection of his mind. If ever the soul of a mortal was endowed with luminous prophetic foresight, this was the case with the pure, unselfish, and sublime soul of Moses. In the desert of Sinai, says the ancient record, at the foot of Horeb, where the flock of his father-in-law was grazing, he received the first divine revelation, which agitated his whole being. Moved and elated —humble, yet confident, Moses returned after this vision to his flock and his home. He had been changed into another being; he felt himself impelled

by the spirit of God to redeem his tribal brethren from bondage, and to educate them for a higher moral life.

Aaron, who had remained in Egypt, likewise had a revelation to meet his brother on Mount Horeb, and to prepare himself jointly with him for the work of redemption. The task of imbuing the servile spirit of the people with a desire for liberty seemed to them far more difficult than that of inducing Pharaoh to act with mercy. Both brothers therefore expected to encounter obstacles and stubborn opposition. Although both men were already advanced in years, they did not shrink from the magnitude of the undertaking, but armed themselves with prophetic courage, and relied on the support of the God of their fathers. First they turned to the representatives of families and tribes, to the elders of the people, and announced their message that God would take pity on Israel's misery, that He had promised them freedom, and that He would lead them back to the land of their fathers. The elders lent a willing ear to the joyful news; but the masses, who were accustomed to slavery, heard the words with cold indifference. Heavy labour had made them cowardly and distrustful. They did not even desire to abstain from worshipping the Egyptian idols. Every argument fell unheeded on their obtuse minds. "It is better for us to remain enthralled as bondsmen to the Egyptians than to die in the desert." Such was the apparently rational answer of the people.

The brothers appeared courageously before the Egyptian King, and demanded, in the name of the God who had sent them, that their people should be released from slavery, for they had come into the country of their own free will, and had preserved their inalienable right to liberty. If the Israelites were at first unwilling to leave the country, and to struggle with the uncertainties of the future,

Pharaoh was still less inclined to let them depart. The mere demand that he should liberate hundreds of thousands of slaves who worked in his fields and buildings, and that he should do so in the name of a God whom he knew not, or for the sake of a cause which he did not respect, induced him to double the work of the Hebrew slaves, in order to deprive them of leisure for thoughts of freedom. Instead of meeting with a joyful reception, Moses and Aaron found themselves overwhelmed with reproaches that through their fault the misery of the unfortunate sufferers had been increased. The king only determined to give way after he and his country had been afflicted by various terrifying and extraordinary phenomena and by plagues, and when he could no longer free himself from the thought that the unknown God was punishing him for his obstinacy. In consequence of successive calamities, the Egyptian king urged the Israelites to hasten and depart, fearing lest any delay might bring destruction upon him and his country. The Israelites had barely time to supply themselves with the provisions necessary for their long and wearisome journey. Memorable was the daybreak of the fifteenth of Nisan (March), on which the enslaved people regained their liberty without shedding a drop of blood. They were the first to whom the great value of liberty was made known, and since then this priceless treasure, the foundation of human dignity, has been guarded by them as the apple of the eye.

Thousands of Israelites, their loins girded, their staves in their hands, their little ones riding on asses, and their herds following them, left their villages and tents, and assembled near the town of Rameses. Strange tribes who had lived by their side, shepherd tribes akin to them in race and language, joined them in their migration. They all rallied round the prophet Moses, obeying his words. He was their king, although he had

eschewed all love of dominion; and he was the first promulgator of the doctrine of equality amongst men. The duty devolving on him during this exodus was more difficult to discharge than his message to the king and to the people of Israel. Only few amongst these thousands of newly-liberated slaves could comprehend the great mission assigned to them. But the masses followed him stolidly. Out of this horde of savages he had to form a nation, conquer a home for them, establish a code of laws, and render them capable of leading a life of rectitude. In this difficult task he could only reckon with certainty on the tribe of Levi, who shared his sentiments and assisted him in his arduous duties as teacher.

Whilst the Egyptians were burying the dead which the plague had suddenly stricken down, the Israelites—being the fourth generation of the first immigrants—left Egypt, after a sojourn of several centuries. They journeyed towards the desert which divides Egypt from Canaan, on the same way by which the last patriarch had entered the Nile country. But Moses would not permit them to go by this short route, because he feared that the inhabitants of Canaan, on the coast of the Mediterranean, would oppose their entry with an armed force; he also apprehended that the tribes, whom their long bondage had made timorous, would take to flight on the first approach of danger.

Their first destination was Mount Sinai, where they were to receive those laws and precepts for the practice of which they had been set free. Pharaoh had, however, determined to recapture the slaves who had been snatched from his grasp. He had already repented that, in a moment of weakness, he had let them depart. When the Israelites saw the Egyptians approaching from afar, they gave way to despair, for they found themselves cut off from every means escape. Before them was the sea,

and behind them the enemy, who would soon overtake them, and undoubtedly reduce them again to bondage. Crying and lamenting, some of them asked Moses, "Are there no graves in Egypt that thou hast brought us out to die in the desert?" However, a means of escape unexpectedly presented itself, and could only be regarded by them as a miracle. A hurricane from the north-east had driven the water of the sea southwards during the night, so that the bed had for the greater part become dry. Their leader quickly seized on this means of escape, and urged the frightened people to hurry towards the opposite shore. His prophetic spirit showed him that they would never again see the Egyptians. They rapidly traversed the short distance of the dry sea-shore, whilst the deeper parts of the water, agitated by a storm, formed two walls on the right and left. During this time the Egyptians were in hot pursuit after the Israelites, in the hope of leading them back to slavery. At daybreak, they reached the west coast of the sea, and perceiving the Israelites on the other side, they hastened after them along the dry pathway, when the tempest suddenly ceased. The mountain-like waves which had risen like walls on both sides, now poured down upon the dry land, and covered men, horses, and chariots in the watery deep. The sea washed some corpses to the coast where the Israelites were resting in safety. They here beheld a marvellous deliverance. The most callous became deeply impressed with this sight, and looked with confidence to the future. On that day they put their firm trust in God and in Moses His messenger. With a loud voice they sang praises for their wonderful deliverance. In chorus they sang—

"I will praise the Lord,
For He is ever glorious.
The horse and his rider He cast into the sea."

The deliverance from Egypt, the passage through

the sea, and the sudden destruction of their resentful enemy, were three occurrences which the Israelites had witnessed, and which would never pass from their memories. In times of the greatest danger and distress, the recollection of this scene inspired them with courage and with the assurance that the God who had redeemed them from Egypt, who had turned the water into dry land, and had destroyed their cruel enemy, would never desert them, but would "ever reign over them." Although the multitude did not long retain this trustful and pious disposition, but fell into despondency at every new difficulty, the intelligent portion of the Israelites were in subsequent trials sustained by their experiences at the Red Sea.

The tribes, delivered from the bonds of slavery, and from the terrors of long oppression, could peaceably now pursue their way. They had yet many days' journey to Sinai, the temporary goal of their wanderings. Although the country through which they travelled was a sandy desert, it was not wanting in water and in pasture land for the shepherds. This territory was not unknown to Moses, their leader, who formerly pastured here the flocks of his father-in-law. In the high mountain ranges of Sinai and its spurs, the water in the spring-time gushes forth copiously from the rocks, forms into rills, and rushes down the slopes towards the Red Sea. Nor did the Israelites suffer through a want of bread, for in its stead they partook of manna. Finding this substance in large quantities, and living on it during a long time, they came to consider its presence as a miracle. It is only on this peninsula that drops sweet as honey exude from the high tamarisk trees, which abound in that region. These drops issue forth in the early morning, and take the globular size of peas or of coriander seeds; but in the heat of the sun they melt away. Elated by their wonderful experiences

the tribes now seemed prepared for receiving their holiest treasure, for the sake of which they had made the long circuitous journey through the desert of Sinai. From Rephidim which lies on a considerable altitude, they were led upwards to the highest range of the mountain, the summit of which appears to touch the clouds.[1] To this spot Moses led the Israelites in the third month after the exodus from Egypt, and appointed their camping ground. He then prepared them for an astounding phenomenon, which appealed both to the eye and the ear. By prayer and abstinence they were bidden to render themselves fit and worthy for lofty impressions and for their exalted mission. With eager expectation and anxious hearts they awaited the third day. A wall round the nearest mountain summit prevented the people from approaching too closely. On the morning of the third day a heavy cloud covered the mountain top; lightning flashed along and enveloped the mountain in a blaze of fire. Peals of thunder shook the surrounding mountains and awakened the echoes. All nature was in uproar, and the world's end seemed to be at hand. With trembling and shaking the old and the young beheld this terrifying spectacle. But its terror did not surpass the awfulness of the words heard by the affrighted people. The clouds of smoke, the lightning, the flames and the peals of thunder had only served as a prelude to these portentous words.

Mightily impressed by the sight of the flaming mountain, the people clearly heard the commandments which, simple in their import, and intelligible to every human being, form the elements of all

[1] The situation of Sinai is not to be sought in the so-called Sinaitic peninsula, but near the land of Edom, on the confines of which was the desert of Paran. Neither Jebel Musa, with the adjacent peaks of Jebel Catherine and Ras-es-Sufsafeh, nor Mount Jerbal, was the true Sinai. See "Monatschrift," by Fränkel-Graetz, 1878, p. 337.

culture. Ten commands rang forth from the mountain-top. The people became firmly convinced that the words were revealed by God. Theft and bearing false witness were stigmatised as crimes. The voice of Sinai condemned evil thoughts no less than evil acts; hence the prohibition, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife . . . nor any possession of thy neighbour." The Indians, the Egyptians, and other nations famous for their colossal structures, had during more than two thousand years gone through many historical experiences which shrink into utter insignificance when compared with this one momentous event.

The work accomplished at Sinai was perfected by an instantaneous act, and remained applicable to all times by perpetuating the supremacy of ethical life and the dignity of mankind. This promulgation of the Law marked the natal hour of the "distinct people," like unto which none had ever existed. The sublime and eternal laws of Sinai—coming from a Deity, whom the senses cannot perceive, from a Redeemer who releases the enthralled and the oppressed—were revealed truths treating of filial duty, of spotless chastity, of the inviolable safety of human life and property, of social integrity, and of the purity of every sentiment.

The Israelites had been led to Mount Sinai as trembling bondsmen; now they came back to their tents as God's people of priests, as a righteous nation (*Jeshurun*). By practically showing that the Ten Commandments are applicable to all the concerns of life, the Israelites were constituted the teachers of the human race, and through them all the families of the earth were to be blessed. No community of men could ever have surmised that even for its own well-being an isolated and insignificantly small nation had been charged with the arduous task of the preceptive office.

The Sinaitic teachings were not of an ephemeral nature, even in regard to their form. Being engraven on tables of stone, they could be easily remembered by successive generations. During a long period these inscribed slabs remained in the custody of the Israelites, and were called "the Tables of the Testimony," or "the Tables of the Law." Being placed in an ark, which became a rallying centre, round which Moses used to assemble the elders of the families, these tables served as a sign of the Sinaitic Covenant. They formed a link between God and the people who had formerly been trodden under foot, and who were now bidden to own no other Lord save the One from whom the Law had gone forth. It was for this reason that the ark, as the repository of the tables, was designated "the Ark of the Covenant." The ethical truths of Sinai became henceforth the basis for a new system of morality, and for the national constitution of the Israelites. These truths were further developed in special laws which had a practical bearing upon the public and private affairs of the people. Slave-holders and slaves were no longer to be found amongst the Israelites. The selling of slaves and perpetual servitude became unlawful. A man who forfeited his liberty was liable to be held in service during six years, but in the seventh year he regained his freedom. Wilful murder and disrespect to parents were punishable with death. The sanctuary could give no protection to criminals condemned to die. The murder of a non-Israelite involved condign punishment. A servant ill-treated by his master recovered his liberty. A man committing an offence on the virtue of a maiden was bound to make her his wife, and to pay a fine to the father of the injured woman. Equitable and humane treatment of the widow and the orphan was enforced; a similar provision was ordained for the benefit of strangers who had joined one of the tribes. The Israelites, in fact,

were bidden to remember their former sojourn in a foreign land, and to refrain from inflicting upon strangers the inhuman treatment which they themselves had formerly endured.

This spirit of equity and brotherly love, though pervading the ancient code of laws, could not produce an instantaneous effect. The duties involved in these laws being of a spiritual nature, were in marked contrast with the former habits of the Israelites. Moses having temporarily absented himself to make preparations for the reception of the Sinaitic law, the dull-witted portion of the people imagined that their God was abandoning them in the desert, and they clamoured for the rule of a visible Godhead. Aaron, who took the lead in the absence of Moses, timorously yielded to this impetuous demand, and countenanced the production of a golden idol. This image of Apis or Mnevis received divine homage from the senseless multitude who danced around it. Moses, on descending from Mount Sinai, ordered the Levites to put to death some thousands of the people. Nothing but the exercise of extreme rigour could have repressed this worship of idols.

With the object of protecting the people from a relapse into idolatry, and of supporting them during their state of transition from barbarism, they were allowed to form a conception of the Deity—though not by means of an image—through some material aid which should appeal to the senses. On Sinai they beheld flashes of lightning with flames of fire, and from the midst of a burning cloud they heard the Ten Commandments. This phenomenon continually served to remind the people of the presence of the Deity as revealed at Sinai. With this object it was ordained that a perpetual fire should be kept alight on a portable altar, and should be carried before the tribes during their migrations. Not the Deity Himself, but the revelation of the

Deity at Sinai, should thereby be made perceptible to the sense of vision. The performance of sacrificial rites was a further concession to the crude perceptions of the people.

The intellectual religion promulgated at Sinai did not employ sacrifices as the final expression of divine adoration, but was designed for the realisation of a moral and holy life; the people, however, had not yet risen to this conception, and could only be advanced by the aid of education and culture. The other ancient nations having found in sacrifices the means of propitiating their deities, the Israelites were permitted to retain the same mode of divine service; but its form was simplified. The altar became an integral part of the sanctuary, in which no image was tolerated. The only objects contained therein were a candelabrum, a table with twelve loaves, symbolising the twelve tribes; and there was also a recess for the Ark of the Covenant. Priests being required for the performance of sacrifices, they preserved amongst the Israelites the three rites practised by other nations. The Levites, as the most devoted and best informed tribe, were charged with sacerdotal functions, as during the sojourn in Egypt. The priests of Israel, unlike those of the Egyptians, were precluded from holding landed property, as such possessions might have tempted them to misuse their prerogatives, and neglect their sacred duties. For this reason it was prescribed that their subsistence should be derived from the offerings made by the people. Collaterally there existed a custom, dating from remote patriarchal ages, which demanded that the first-born son of every family should attend to the performance of sacrificial rites. These duties coming into collision with those of the Levites could not be abruptly abolished, and stood in the way of the pure Sinaitic teachings. The materialism of the age demanded indulgent concessions, com-

bined with provisions tending to the refinement of popular habits. Only through the aid of better instructed men could the people gradually be made to understand the non-essential nature of sacrifices.

During their forty years of wandering in the desert the Israelites sought pastures for their flocks in the interior, and also in the proximity of the mountains.

During these migrations Moses instructed the people. The older generation gradually passed away. Their descendants, obedient to the teachings of the lawgiver and his disciples, formed a docile, pious, and valiant community, and became proficient in the knowledge of their laws.

Moses now surrounded himself with councillors, who were the chiefs of seventy families. This system became a model for later forms of administration. The Council of Elders joined in important deliberations and assisted in the management of public business. On the advice of Jethro, his father-in-law, Moses appointed inferior and higher judges, who respectively had under their jurisdiction ten, a hundred, and a thousand families. The people had the right of electing their own judges, whose appointment they then recommended to Moses. These judges were charged to maintain strict impartiality in cases of litigation between members of the tribes of Israel, or between Israelites and strangers. Nor was it within the discretion of the judges to make distinctions between persons of high and low degree. They were also commanded to keep their hands clean from bribes, and to give their verdicts according to the principles of equity, "for justice belongs unto God." Moses further pointed out to them that justice must be rightly dispensed, because its source is in God himself. Brotherly love, mutual concord, equality before the law, equity and mercy were the high ideals which he held before his disciples. The announcement

of these laws and teachings marked an eventful era in human history. As such it was characterised by the prophets, who called it "the bridal time of the daughter of Israel;" and the season of "her espousals, when she went after her God in the land which was not sown."

Israel's wanderings had nearly come to a conclusion, and the younger generation was well fitted for the attainment of the object of its settlement. A further sojourn in the desert would have inured the people to habits of restlessness, and might have reduced them for ever to the nomadic condition of the Midianites and the Amalekites. They appear to have made an unsuccessful raid in a northern direction whilst pursuing the journey along the caravan roads. In a second defeat some of them were captured by their enemies. But this discomfiture was apparently avenged by combatants belonging to the tribe of Judah, who were aided by men of the tribe of Simeon, and by Kenites, with whose assistance they seized several cities.

The other tribes were prepared to effect an entrance into the country by following a circuitous route on the eastern side. This expedition might have been shortened if the Idumeans, who dwelt on the mountain ranges of Seir, had permitted the Israelites to pass through their territory. Apparently the Idumeans were afraid that the invading Israelites would dispossess them of the land, and they therefore sallied forth to obstruct the direct road. Their opposition forced the tribes of Israel to make a long detour round the country of Idumea, and to turn to the east of the mountain ranges of Seir in order to approach Canaan from the opposite side. Not being permitted to attack the Idumeans and the kindred tribes of the Ammonites, the Israelites had to traverse the border of the eastern desert in order to reach the inhabited regions at the source of the Arnon, which river flows into the Dead Sea.

Moses now sent conciliatory messages to Sihon, to request that the people might pass through his territory on their way to the Jordan. Sihon refused his consent, and marched an army to the borders of the desert to oppose the advance of the invaders. The Israelites, animated with youthful ardour, surpassed their fathers in prowess and in power of onslaught. They put themselves in battle array and routed the hostile troops, whose king they slew at Jahaz.

This victory was highly advantageous to the Israelites; it strengthened their position and inspired them with self-reliance. They at once took possession of the conquered district, and henceforth abandoned their nomadic life. Whilst the Israelites felt confident of success in conquering the Land of Promise, the Canaanites, on the other hand, were terror-stricken at the defeat of the mighty Sihon. The Israelites could now move about freely, being no longer incommoded by the narrow belt of the desert, nor by the suspicions of unfriendly tribes. Dangers having given way to a state of security, this sudden change of circumstances aroused in their bosoms virtuous emotions, together with ignoble passions.

The people of Moab now perceived that their feeble existence was threatened by their new neighbours. Balak, their king, felt that he could not cope with the Israelites in the open field of battle, and he preferred to employ the arts of Balaam, the Idumean or Midianite magician, whose maledictions were supposed to have the power of calling down distress and destruction on an entire people or on a single individual. Balaam being struck with amazement at the sight of Israel's encampment, the intended maledictions were changed on his lips into blessings. He averred that "no enchantment avails against Jacob, and no divination against Israel," a glorious future being assured to

that people. But he advised the king to have recourse to a different charm, which might have a pernicious effect upon the Israelites, namely, to beguile them to the vice of profligacy by means of depraved temple maidens.

Balak accepted this advice. The Israelites, during their migrations, had lived on friendly terms with the wandering Midianites, and entertained no suspicions when admitting the latter into their encampments and tents. Counselled by Balaam and instigated by Balak, many Midianities brought their wives and daughters into the tents of the Israelites, who were then invited to join the idolatrous festivities at the shrine of Baal-peor. On such occasions it was the custom for women to sacrifice in the tents their sense of virtue, and the guerdon of dishonour was then presented as an oblation to the idols. Many an Israelite was led into profligacy by these allurements, and partook of the sacrificial feasts—two sins which tended to sap the foundation of the doctrine revealed on Sinai. Unhappily no one in Israel seemed willing to obey the command of Moses by checking this outbreak of vice. Phineas, Aaron's grandson, was the only man whose heart revolted against these excesses. Seeing that a Midianite woman with a chief of the tribe of Simeon entered a tent, he stabbed both of them to death; and thus was the raging plague turned away from the people.

On the other hand, there was now witnessed a significant change in Israel. The unexpected and eventful victories had aroused amongst them the melodious power of song—a first indication of that talent, without which no nation can attain to a superior degree of culture. The first songs of the Hebrew muse were those of war and victory. The authors (*moshĕlim*) of warlike hymns rose at once in public estimation, and their productions were

preserved in special collections, as for example, in the Book of the Wars of God.

Hebrew poetry in its early stages was deficient in depth and elegance, but it had two characteristics which in the course of time were developed to the highest stage of refinement. With regard to form it exhibited a symmetry in the component parts of each verse (*parallelismus membrorum*). An identical train of thought was repeated with appropriate variations in two or even three divisions of the verse. In the treatment of a theme, the muse of early Hebrew poetry displayed a tendency to irony; this being the result of a twofold conception, namely, that of the ideal aspect by the side of antithetic reality.

The Israelites, seeking to arrive at the goal of their wishes and to gain possession of the Land of Promise, could not tarry in the fertile region between the Arnon and the Jabbok. They had to prepare for crossing the Jordan. But now the evil consequences of having triumphed over Sihon and Og became manifest. The tribes of Reuben and Gad announced that they wished to remain in the conquered land, because its verdant pastures were well adapted for their numerous flocks and their herds of cattle and camels. In making such a demand it appeared that these tribes desired to sever their lot from that of their brethren, and to live as independent nomads. Oppressed with this cause of anxiety, Moses reproached them bitterly for their defection, but felt constrained to grant them the conquered land under the condition that a contingent of their combatants should assist the warriors of the brother-tribes and follow them across the Jordan. This allotment of land to the two tribes caused an unexpected territorial division. The land possessed by these tribes became known as the Trans-Jordanic territory (*Eber ha-Jarden* or *Peraea*). In the process of

time this concession proved more injurious than beneficial.

The rest of the tribes were on the eve of crossing the Jordan when their great leader Moses was removed by death. The thirty days which the Israelites spent in mourning were no excessive sacrifice. His loss was irreparable, and they felt themselves utterly bereft. Amongst all lawgivers, founders of states, and teachers of mankind, none has equalled Moses. Not only did he, under the most inauspicious circumstances, transform a horde of slaves into a nation, but he imprinted on it the seal of everlasting existence: he breathed into the national body an immortal soul. He held before his people ideals, the acceptance of which was indispensable, since all their weal and woe depended upon the realisation or non-realisation of those ideals. Moses could well declare that he had carried the people as a father carries his child. His patience and his courage had rarely deserted him; his unselfishness, and his meekness of disposition, were two prominent qualities, which, together with his clear prophetic vision, eminently fitted him to be the instrument of the Deity. Free from jealousy, he wished that all Israelites might be prophets like himself, and that God would endue them with His spirit. Moses became at a subsequent epoch the unattainable ideal of a prophet. Succeeding generations were elated by the thought that this brilliant example of humanity had watched the infant state of the people of Israel. Even the death of Moses served as an enduring lesson. In the land of Moab, in the valley facing Mount Peor—which was held sacred by the population of that district—he was quietly entombed, and to this day no one has known the spot where he lay buried. It was designed that the Israelites should not deify him, but should be kept from following the idolatrous practice of other nations, who deified their

kings, and their men of real or presumed greatness, as also the founders of their religion.

Sad at heart on account of the death of their beloved leader, who was not permitted to conduct them into the Land of Promise, but comforted by the lofty recollections of the redemption from Egyptian bondage, the passage through the sea, and the revelation on Sinai—encouraged also by the victories over Sihon, Og, and the Midianites—the tribes of Israel crossed the Jordan, on a day in the bright spring time, and were conducted on their journey by Joshua the faithful disciple of Moses.

## CHAPTER II.

### OCCUPATION OF THE LAND OF CANAAN.

Joshua's Succession—Passage of the Jordan—Conquest of Jericho—The Gibeonites—Coalition of Canaanite Cities against the Israelites—Settlement in the Land—Isolation of the Tribes—Allotments—The Tribe of Levi—The Ark of the Covenant at Shiloh—Condition of Canaan at the time of the Conquest—Climate and Fertility—Intellectual Activity—Poetry of Nature—Remnants of Canaanite Populations—Death of Joshua.

On crossing the Jordan and entering Canaan, the Israelites met with no resistance. Terror had paralysed the tribes and populations who then held the land. Nor were they united by any tie which might have enabled them to oppose the invaders. Although mention is made of thirty-one kings, besides those who ruled near the coast-line of the Mediterranean, these rulers were petty chiefs, who were independent of each other, and each of them governed only a single township with the adjoining district. They remained passive, whilst the Israelites were encamping near Gilgal, between the Jordan and Jericho. The fortress of Jericho—being exposed to the first brunt of an attack from the Israelites, and having no help to expect from elsewhere—was entirely left to its own resources. The tribes of Israel, on the other hand, were headed by a well-tried leader; they were united, skilled in warfare, and eager for conquest.

Joshua, the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, was accepted as the rightful successor of the great Prophet. Moses having laid his hands upon the disciple, had endowed him with his spirit. Yet Joshua was far from being a prophet. Practical in his aspirations, he was more concerned in affairs of immediate necessity and utility, than in ideals of

the future. In his earlier years, when overthrowing the Amalekites near Rephidim, he had already given proof of courage and good generalship. His connection with the tribe of Ephraim, the most distinguished amongst the brother-tribes, was likewise of advantage to his position as a commander. The Ephraimites, with their pride and obstinacy, would otherwise have withheld their allegiance. This tribe having yielded obedience to him, the other tribes readily followed the example.

The first place to be attacked was Jericho. This city was situated in an exceedingly fertile mountain district. Here throve the lofty palm tree and the precious balsam shrub. Owing to the proximity of the Dead Sea, the climate of Jericho has during the greater part of the year a high temperature, and the vegetation ripens there earlier than in the interior of the country. The conquest of Jericho was, therefore, of primary importance; this city was strongly fortified, and its inhabitants, timid under open attack, felt secure only within the precincts of their defences. The walls of Jericho, according to the scriptural narrative, crumbled to pieces at the mighty and far-sounding shouts of Israel's warriors. They entered the city; and, meeting with little resistance, they slew the population, which was enfeebled by depraved habits. After this easy victory the warriors of Israel became impetuous, and they imagined that a small portion of their force was sufficient to reduce Ai, a scantily populated fortress, which lay at a distance of two or three hours' journey to the north. Joshua therefore sent against Ai a small detachment of his men, but at the first onslaught they were repulsed, and many of them were slain on the field of battle. This defeat spread terror among the Israelites, who feared that they were forsaken by God; whilst it gave new courage to the Canaanites. It was only when the entire army had been drawn

up, and by the employment of a stratagem, that Joshua succeeded in taking Ai. Bethel, situated in the vicinity, likewise fell by a ruse into the hands of the Ephraimites. These two mountain fastnesses being captured, the inhabitants of the adjoining towns and villages became even more faint-hearted. Without awaiting an attack they abandoned their homes, and fled to the north, the west and the south. The country being more or less denuded of its inhabitants, was now occupied by the conquerors. The Gibeonites, or Hivites, in the tract of land called Gibeon, freely submitted to Joshua and his people. They agreed that the Israelites should share with them the possession of their territory on the condition that their lives should be spared. Joshua and the elders having agreed to these terms, the compact, according to the practice of that age, was ratified by an oath. In this way the Israelites acquired possession of the whole mountain district from the borders of the great plain to the vicinity of Jerusalem, the subsequent metropolis of Palestine. The borderland of the plain separated the original inhabitants of the north from those of the south, and neither of these populations was willing to render help to the other. The southern Canaanites now became more closely allied. The apprehension that their land might fall an easy prey to the invaders overcame their mutual jealousies and their love of feud; being thus brought into closer union with each other, they ventured to engage in aggressive warfare. Five kings, or rather chiefs of townships, those of Jebus (Jerusalem), Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon, joined together to punish the Gibeonites for submitting to the invaders, for whom they had opened the road, and whom they had helped to new conquests. The Gibeonites, in face of this danger, implored the protection of Joshua, who forthwith led his victorious warriors against the allied

troops of the five towns, and inflicted on them a crushing defeat near Gibeon. The beaten army fled many miles towards the west and the south, and in their flight they were struck down by a hailstorm. This day of battle appears to have been regarded as one of signal triumph; its achievements were remembered even five hundred years later, and were commemorated in a martial song :—

> "Joshua spake:
> 'O Sun, stand thou still near Gibeon,
> And thou, O Moon, near the valley of Ajalon!'
> And the sun stood still,
> And the moon remained at rest,
> Until the people had chastised the foes." [1]

The passage of the Jordan, auspicious beyond expectation, and the rapid succession of victories were new wonders which could fitly be associated with those of ancient days. They afforded rich themes for praise, which was not ascribed to the great deeds of the people, but to the marvellous working of the Deity.

The victory at Gibeon opened access to the south, and the Israelites could now freely move their forces in that direction; but there were still some strongholds in the south which they could neither capture nor keep in subjection.

The principal work—the subjection of the central portion of Canaan—being now accomplished, the tribes of Israel ceased to form one combined army, and in this severance they were probably influenced by the example of the children of Joseph. The latter, who were divided into the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, claimed to have precedence in the ranks of Israel. This claim may be traced back, as has already been shown, to their sojourn in Egypt, and also to the fact that Joshua, the leader of the Israelites, was descended from Ephraim. Hence it was that the children of

[1] Joshua x. 12, 13.

Joseph sought to obtain possession of the central mountain range, which abounded in springs and had a very rich soil. Shechem, the ancient town of the Hivites, being situated between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, had on every side a good supply of water, and became the principal city of the land. But the two divisions, Ephraim and Manasseh, were unwilling to content themselves with this desirable district (which was named "Mount Ephraim"). As Joshua was one of their own tribe, they expected from him the favours of a partizan, and that he would place no obstacle to their demands. They alleged, therefore, that the territory allotted to them was insufficient for their numerous families. They desired to possess not only the fine and fertile plain which extended many miles to the north, but also the land still more distant in the same direction round Mount Tabor; but they did not find Joshua so yielding as they had anticipated. With a touch of irony he told them that since they were so numerous, they ought to be able to conquer Mount Tabor, in the land of the Perizzites and the Rephaites, where they might clear away the forest. Disappointed by this reply they withdrew from the expedition of the combined tribes, and were well able to content themselves with the extent of territory which had been originally allotted to them. Owing to this withdrawal from the common cause, the other tribes were induced to follow a similar course, and to acquire, independently of each other, the land necessary for their respective settlements. Four tribes fixed their attention upon the north, and four upon the south and the west. The expedition from which the sons of Joseph had retired was hazarded by the four tribes of Issachar, Zebulon, Asher, and Naphtali. They descended into the plain of Jezreel, where they left a portion of their settlers. Another portion pushed on to the northern hill

regions, which touched the base of the lofty mountain range. These tribes were even less adapted than the children of Joseph for engaging in warfare with the inhabitants of the plain, to whose rapidly moving war-chariots they could have offered no resistance. The children of Issachar were satisfied with the opportunity of acquiring pasture land in the great plain, and they had no desire to throw themselves into fortified cities. The men of this tribe appear to have placed themselves under the supremacy of the Canaanites, for they loved a peaceful life, and as they found the land fertile they readily bore the imposition of tribute. Zebulon, the twin tribe of Issachar, was more active, and appears to have conquered for itself a safe settlement in the north of Mount Tabor. The remaining two tribes, Asher and Naphtali, seem to have been in need of much greater efforts to gain a firm footing among the neighbouring Canaanite population, who were more combative and also more closely united. These warriors concentrated themselves at Hazor, where Jabin, the local king, ruled over several districts. This king summoned the inhabitants of the allied cities to take up arms and destroy the invading Israelites. The tribes of Asher and Naphtali, unable to cope with the enemy, hastened to invoke Joshua's assistance. At that time a sense of mutual sympathy was still keen among the tribes, and Joshua found them ready to bring speedy relief to their brethren in the north. With these auxiliaries, and with the men of Asher and Naphtali, Joshua surprised the Canaanites, who were allied under King Jabin, near Lake Merom, defeated them, and put the remainder to flight. This was the second great victory he gained over the allied enemy. Through the battle of Merom the two tribes succeeded in firmly establishing themselves in the region situated at the west side of the upper course of the Jordan

and at the east side of the Mediterranean Sea. Asher and Naphtali being settled at the extreme north, occupied the position of out-posts, the former being placed at the west and the other at the east of the plateau.

At the same time four other tribes acquired their settlements in the south; and they relied upon their own efforts without being helped by the entire army of the people. The small tribe of Benjamin, more closely connected with the children of Joseph, was probably assisted by the latter in obtaining a narrow and not very fertile strip of land at the southern frontier line. This was the district of the Gibeonites, with some appurtenances to the east and the west.

The Canaanites, who dwelt in the western plain towards the sea-board, had also iron chariots, on which account the Israelites, soon after their invasion, did not venture to attack them. Still there was no alternative for the rest of the tribes, but to seek their homes in the western region. Judah was the most numerous and the mightiest of these tribes, and was joined by the children of Simeon, who subordinated themselves like vassals to a ruling tribe.

At the southern extremity, near the desert, the Kenites, kinsmen and allies of the Israelites, had been domiciled since the days of Israel's wandering through the wilderness. By the friendly aid of this people the Judeans hoped to succeed more easily in gaining new dwelling-places. They avoided a war with the Jebusites, with whom they possibly had made a compact of peace, and went round the territory in which Jerusalem, the subsequent capital, was situated.

The first place they captured was the ancient town of Hebron, where Caleb distinguished himself by his bravery. Hebron became the chief city of the tribe of Judah. Kirjath-Sepher, or Debir, was taken by Othniel, Caleb's half-brother. Other

leaders of this tribe continued the conquest of various other cities. In the earlier days, the tribe of Judah seems to have lived on friendly terms with the original inhabitants of the land and to have dwelt peaceably by their side. The extensive settlement of Judah was better suited for pasture than for agriculture. The new settlers and the old inhabitants had therefore no inducements for displacing each other, or for indulging in a deadly strife. The large tracts of land were parcelled out into small plots where the Canaanites and Amalekites retained their homesteads.

The tribe of Simeon had no independent possessions, not even a single town which it could claim as its own, and was altogether merged in the tribe of Judah. The Simeonites dwelt in towns of Judah, without, however, having a voice in the deliberations of the tribe. The scantiest provision seems to have been made for the tribe of Dan, the number of families belonging to this tribe being apparently very small. Nor does it appear to have received such aid from a brother tribe as was given to Issachar and to Simeon. The Danites seem to have been followers of the tribe of Ephraim. This tribe selfishly allowed the Danites to acquire an insecure portion in the south-west of its own territory, or, rather, a small portion in the land of the Benjamites. It now devolved upon the Danites to conquer for themselves the land on the plain of Saron, which extends towards the sea, and to establish themselves there. The Amorites, however, prevented them from accomplishing this design and forced them to retreat into the mountains; but here the sons of Ephraim and the Benjamites refused them the possession of permanent dwelling-places. The Danites were therefore during a long time compelled to lead a camp-life, and at last one section of this tribe had to go in search of a settlement far away to the north.

The conquest of Canaan had proceeded with such rapidity as to impress the contemporaries and the posterity of the people with the opinion that this success was the work of a miracle. Not quite half a century earlier the Israelites had been scared away from the borders of Palestine, after the spies had spread the report that the inhabitants of the land were too strong to be vanquished. The same inhabitants were now in such dread of the Israelites as to abandon their possessions without attempting to make any resistance, or if they did take up a defensive position they were easily routed. On this account the conviction gained ground amongst the Israelites that the Deity Himself had led their warriors, and had scattered their opponents in utter confusion. This great conquest became, therefore, the natural theme of spirited poetry.

Although insufficient portions had been allotted to a few of the tribes, such as the Simeonites and the Danites, they still owned some lands which might afford a partial subsistence, and become the nucleus for a further extension of property. The Levites alone had been left altogether unprovided with landed possessions. This was done in strict conformity with the injunctions of Moses, lest the tribe of priests by misusing its rights of birth, should become affluent agriculturists, and be drawn away from their holy avocations by the desire of enriching themselves—like the Egyptian priests, who, under the pretext of defending the interest of religion, despoiled the people of its property, and formed a plutocratic caste.

The Levites were to remain poor, and content themselves with the grants made to them by the owners of lands and herds, they being required to devote all their attention to the sanctuary and the divine law.

During Joshua's rule the camp of Gilgal between the Jordan and Jericho was the centre of divine

worship and of the Levitical encampment; here also the tabernacle of the covenant had been erected and sacrifices were offered up. But Gilgal could not permanently serve as the place for assembling the people, for it lay in an unproductive and unfrequented district. As soon as the affairs of the people were more consolidated, and when the Trans-Jordanic warriors had returned to their homes, another locality had to be selected for the sanctuary. As a matter of course it was expedient that the sacred place should be situated within the confines of Ephraim. Joshua had likewise his seat amongst the Ephraimites, namely at Timnath-Serah, a town which that tribe had gratefully allotted to him.

Shiloh (Salèm) was chosen as the spot for the establishment of the sanctuary. When the ark of the covenant arrived there, an altar was as a matter of course erected by its side. Here the public assemblies were held, if not by all the tribes, certainly by those of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin. Phineas, the high priest of the house of Aaron, and the priests who succeeded him in office, took up their abode in Shiloh. It is highly probable that many of the Levites resided in that town whilst others were dispersed throughout the towns of the several tribes; but on the whole they led a wandering life.

Through the immigration of the Israelites the land of Canaan not only received a new name but assumed a different character. It became a "Holy Land," "the Heritage of God," and was regarded as favourable to the people's destination of leading a holy life.

Foreign countries, contrasted with Palestine, appeared to them to be profane and utterly unadapted for perpetuating the devout worship of the One Spiritual God, or for enforcing the observance of His law. The Holy Land was looked

s if it were sensible of the pious or of the upon a conduct of its inhabitants. There were wicked iniquities which the land was supposed to three i as the most heinous. These were murder, spurn usness, and idolatry. The conviction was licentio that on account of such misdeeds the land genera st out its former inhabitants, and that it had c not retain the Israelites if they indulged would nilar crimes. These ideas took deep root in s ngst the people of Israel, and they regarded an alestine as surpassing in its precious qualities every other country. It was, indeed, an undeniable fact that the Land of Israel (so it was named from the time when this people took possession of it) had striking distinctions which were unequalled in any other portion of the globe. Within the small expanse of territory, one hundred and fifty miles by sixty, if the Trans-Jordanic region be included, contrasting peculiarities are crowded together which give to that country a marvellous character. The perpetual snow tops of Lebanon and Hermon in the north, overlook the ranges of mountain and valleys far away to the sandy desert in the south, where a scorching heat, like that of tropical Africa, burns up all vegetation. In close proximity to each other, trees of various kinds are found to thrive, which elsewhere are separated by great distances. Here is the slender palm tree which only shoots up under a high temperature, and there grows the oak tree which cannot endure such a heat. If the heat of the south fires the blood, and fills man with violent passions, the wind sweeping over northern snow-fields, on the other hand, renders him calm, thoughtful, and deliberate.

On two sides Palestine is bordered by water. The Mediterranean Sea, extending along the western margin of the land, forms inlets for ships. Along the eastern boundary flows the Jordan which takes its rise in the slopes of Mount Hermon and runs in

nearly a straight line from north to south. In the north the Jordan flows through the "Lake of the Harp" (*Kinnereth, Genesareth*, or Lake of Tiberias) and in the south this river is lost in the wonderful "Salt-sea." These two basins form likewise a strange contrast. The "Lake of the Harp" (also "Lake of Galilee") contains sweet water. In its depths fishes of various kinds disport themselves. On its fertile banks the vine, the palm, the fig-tree, and other fruit-bearing trees are found to thrive. In the high temperature of this region the fruits arrive at their maturity a month earlier than on the mountain land. The Salt Sea or "The Sea of the Deep Basin" (*arabah*) produces a contrary effect, and has rightly been called the Dead Sea. In its waters no vertebrate animals can exist. The excessive quantities of salt, together with magnesia, and masses of asphalt contained in that sea, kill every living object. The atmosphere of this region is likewise impregnated with salt, and as the adjacent land is intersected with lime-pits, it forms a dreary desert. The oval-shaped border of the Dead Sea rises in some parts to more than 1,300 feet above the water level, and being totally bare and barren, the entire district presents a most dismal aspect.

Between the water-line and the mountain walls there are, however, some oases in which the balsam shrub thrives, and which in regard to fertility are not inferior to any spot on this earth. Being situated near the centre of the western sea-board, this strip of land is exceedingly fruitful. But luxuriant as the vegetation of this place is, it is even surpassed by that of the oasis on the south-east corner of the Dead Sea. Here once stood the town of Zoar, which was noted as the city of palm-trees (Tamarah). This locality likewise favoured in former ages the growth of the balsam shrub. At a distance of five miles to the north-east, near the town of Beth-Haran, the famous

balm of Gilead was found; but by the side of the Dead Sea miasmatic salt-marshes extend for a length of several miles. The shores of this sea and also of the Sea of Galilee send forth thermal springs impregnated with sulphur, and these serve to cure various maladies.

The essentially mountainous configuration of Palestine was of great benefit to the Israelites. Two long and imposing mountain ranges, separated by a deep valley, raise their heads in the north, like two snow-capped giants. One of them is Mount Lebanon, the tallest peak of which has a height of more than 10,000 feet, and is named *Dhor el-Khedib*. The other mountain is Hermon (the Anti-Lebanon), the highest point of which, *the Sheikh*, has an elevation of 9,300 feet. The Lebanon was never included in the land of Israel; it remained in the possession of the Phœnicians, the Aramæans, and the people who succeeded the latter. This mountain range was of practical utility to the Israelites, who derived from its celebrated cedar forests the materials for their edifices. Besides this, its lofty and odoriferous crests formed a favourite theme in the imagery of the Hebrew poets. Mount Hermon, with its snow-covered head, touches the north side of the ancient territory of Israel. This mountain, if not hidden by intervening hills, forms a charming object of admiration even at a distance of a hundred miles.

The spurs of these two ranges were continued in the northern mountains of Israel (Mount Naphtali, subsequently named the mountains of Galilee), the highest peak of which rises to 4,000 feet. These heights have a gradual slope towards the great and fertile plain of Jezreel, which is only 500 feet above the level of the sea. Several mountain ranges intersect this plain, and divide it into smaller plains. Mount Tabor (1,865 feet high) is not so much distinguished for its height as for its cupola-shape.

Mount Moreh (1,830 feet), now called *Ed-Duhy*, seems to lean against Mount Tabor. Not far from there, more towards the east, run the hill-tops of Gilboa (2,000 feet). On the west side of the great plain lies the extensive tree-crested range of Carmel, which forms a wall close to the sea. The great plain of Jezreel has the shape of an irregular triangle, with a length of twenty miles from north to south, and a breadth of 615 miles from east to west, having the mountain border of Carmel on the one side and that of Gilboa on the other. This plain divides the land into two unequal parts. The northern half, which is the smaller, received at a later time the name of Galilee. On the south of this plain the ground gradually rises, and at one point attains an elevation of 2,000 feet. This district was called Mount Ephraim. From Jerusalem, southwards to Hebron, the land again ascends to a height of 3,0[illegible] feet, forming the land of Judah. Here there is a gradual descent, and at the old frontier town of Beersheba the level does not rise above 700 feet. At this point begins the table-land of Mount Paran. This district was not included in the actual territory of Israel. Both Mount Ephraim and Mount Judah have a slope from east to west. Between the mountain-side and the Mediterranean Sea, from north to south, that is, from Carmel to the southern steppe, a plain of increasing breadth extends, which is called "the Plain of Sharon," or the "low country" (*shefelah*). In the east the mountain declines towards the Jordan. Some peaks of this mountain acquired a special significance. Such were the two hills by the side of Shechem, *Gerizim*, "the mountain of blessing" (2,650 feet), and *Ebal*, "the mountain of the curse" (2,700 feet); *Bethel*, in the east (2,400 feet); *Mizpeh*, some hours' journey from the subsequent capital; *Mount Zion* (2,610 feet); and the *Mount of Olives* (2,700

feet). This peculiar and greatly varied configuration of the land had its effect not only upon the productions of the soil, but also upon the character of the people. From north to south, Palestine is divided into three belts. The broad mountainous tract occupies the centre; the low land (*shefelah*) extends from the west to the sea, and the meadows (*kikkar*, *araboth*) from the east to the Jordan. In the lowland the climate is mild; in the mountains, during the rainy season it is severe, but temperate in the summer. In the district of the Jordan the heat continues during the greater part of the year.

The land has no rivers which retain their waters throughout the year, with the exception of the Jordan; and even this river, owing to its precipitous course, is not navigable. The Jordan rises from three sources in the slopes of Hermon. At first it runs sluggishly, and before entering the Lake of Merom it divides into small streams. On emerging from the lake, its waters are united in a narrow basalt bed, and flow into the Lake of Galilee. On issuing from the lake, the Jordan widens, rushes over rocky ground, and, after forming many rapids in its swift course, empties itself and disappears in the Dead Sea. During spring-time, when the melting snow of Hermon swells the waters, this river fertilises the adjoining low-lying plains, especially those on its eastern bank.

The other streams, including the Jarmuk and Jabbok, become dry in the hot summer season. Such winter streams (*wadi*), nevertheless, enhance the productiveness of the district through which they flow, as the cultivated lands are situated on the banks of these intermittent streams. The increase of vegetation is also favoured by the small springs which flow down the hills without being collected into rivulets. The districts devoid of springs are supplied with drinking-water by

the rain, which is gathered in cisterns excavated in the rocks.

The greater portion of Palestine is blessed with an abundant yield of produce. This is due to the nature of the soil, and to the copious drainage from the highlands of Lebanon, Hermon (Anti-Lebanon), with their spurs, as well as to the rain which falls twice a year. The land flowed "with milk and honey," and has retained this characteristic even to the present day, wherever the industry of man is active. It is decidedly a beautiful land "of brooks, of water, of fountains and depths which spring out of valleys and hills. A land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive-oil and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness: thou shalt not want anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of those hills thou mayest dig brass."[1] The plains are especially fruitful, and yield to the laborious cultivator two crops in the year. The land lying to the north of the plain of Jezreel is likewise fruitful. In olden times it had such an abundance of olive trees as to give rise to the saying that the husbandman "dips his foot in oil."

The central district to the south of the great plain, which belonged to Ephraim and Manasseh, rewarded its toilers with rich harvests. On all sides springs gush forth from the rocky fissures; and as their waters gather together, they attain sufficient force to drive the mills, besides supplying the soil with proper moisture. The land of the sons of Joseph was blessed,

"With the fruit of the ha[illegible],
And of the deep that cou[illegible]eath;
And with precious fruit bro[illegible]h by the sun,
And with the precious things [illegible]h by the moon."[2]

The hill-sides were adorned by blooming gardens,

[1] Deut. viii. 7 - 9.

[2] Deut. xxxiii. 13, 14.

and by vineyards exuberantly laden with grapes. The mountains, overshadowed by forests of terebinths, oaks and yew trees, favoured the fertility of the valleys.

In favourable situations the palm-tree produced a superabundance of sweet fruit, the juicy contents of which sometimes even trickled to the ground. There was less fruitfulness in the southern tracts, owing to the numerous chalk hills and the small number of valleys. But even here good pastures were found for the herds. Below Hebron the extreme south, with its barren rocks and strips of sand, presents a dreary aspect. The burning wind, in its passage over the desert, dries the atmosphere and impoverishes the soil. This district was therefore rightly termed *Negeb* "the arid land." A few oases, which are found here and there, owed their verdure to the presence of water, which counteracted the effect of the scorching heat. In such humid places the vegetation became exceedingly luxuriant under the care of diligent cultivators. To the idler this land yielded no produce.

The climate was made salubrious by the sea-breezes and the free currents of mountain air, the inhabitants being therefore of a sturdy frame. Here were no miasmatic swamps to poison the atmosphere. Diseases and the ravages of plagues were of rare occurrence, and were only caused by infections imported from elsewhere. Compared with the vast dominions of the ancient world, Palestine is extremely small. From some lofty central points one can survey at a single glance the eastern and western frontiers, the waves of the Mediterranean and the surface of the Dead Sea, together with the Jordan, and the opposite mountains of Gilead. A view from Mount Hermon is still more commanding, and presents beautiful and extremely diversified landscapes. Throughout the greater part of the

year the air is so exceedingly pure and transparent as to afford no true conception of the distances between the eye and the surrounding scenery. Even remote objects appear to be placed within close proximity.

Sensitive hearts and reflecting minds might well be touched "by the finger of God" in this region where "Tabor and Hermon praise His name." Lofty peaks and undulating crests of mountains are seen in alternation with verdant plains, and their images are reflected upon the glittering surface of many waters. These towering heights, far from overburdening and depressing the mind, draw it away from the din of the noisy world and call forth cheering and elevating emotions.

If the beholder be endowed with the slightest spark of poetic sentiment, it is brought into life and action by the attractive sight of this panorama. From the varied charms of scenic beauty the most gifted men of this land drew their inspiration for their pensive poetry. Neither the Greeks nor the Romans had a conception of this species of poesy, which displayed a complete recognition of the greatness of the Deity. Nations of a later epoch only became acquainted with this poetry, by being the disciples of Israel. Whilst the eye surveyed from a prominent stand-point the objects encircled by an extensive horizon, the soul was impressed with the sublime idea of infinitude—an idea which, without such aid could only be indirectly and artificially conveyed to the intellectual faculties. Single-hearted and single-minded men in the midst of such surroundings became imbued with a perception of the grandeur and infinity of the Godhead, whose guiding power the people of Israel acknowledged in the early stages of their history. They recognised the existence of the same power in the ceaseless agitation of the apparently boundless ocean; in the periodical return and withdrawal

of fertilising showers; in the dew which descended from the heights into the valleys; in the miracles which daily happened within a narrow compass, but which became disclosed when each upward step commanded a wider range of vision.

> "He that formeth the mountains and createth the winds,
> He who turneth the morning into darkness,
> Who treadeth upon the high places of the earth,
> He is the Lord of hosts."*

At a later period the religious conviction gained ground that God's omnipotence is equally manifested in ordaining the events of history as in regulating the succession of physical phenomena; that the same God who lays down the unchanging laws of nature, exercises an identical supremacy in effecting the rise and fall of nations. This conviction gained its strength among the people who, through their vicissitudes and enlarged perceptive faculties, acquired a full appreciation of what is unparalleled and marvellous within the sphere of existing things. The land of Gilead had the same characteristics that appertained to the region on the other side of the Jordan. This district, originally owned by the Amorites and by the kings of Sihon and Og, was now held by the sons of Reuben and Gad. From the summits of this territory also immense tracts of land were visible at a single view; but nothing beyond a mere blue streak could be seen of the distant ocean. This side of the Jordan was, therefore, less endowed than the opposite side with poetic suggestiveness. The land of Gilead gave birth to no poet, it was the home of only one prophet, and his disposition was marked by a fierceness which accorded well with the rude and rough character of the territory in which he was born.

The Jordan formed both a geographical and an

* Amos iv. 13.

tellectual landmark. At the time of Israel's conquests, Canaan was already dotted with cities and fortified places in which the invaders found some rudiments of civic culture. Gilead, on the other hand, contained but few towns, and these lay far apart from each other.

The territories to the west of the Jordan had only partially been subjected and allotted. Large and important tracts of land were still in possession of the original inhabitants, but it can no longer be determined whether it was through the remissness of Joshua that the land of Canaan was not completely conquered. In his advancing years Joshua did not display such vigour of action as was shown by his teacher, Moses. Gradually he appears to have lost the energy that is necessary in a commander. His followers of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh had already obtained the most productive part of the land; they were now resting on their laurels, and damped the warlike impetus of their brethren. The excitements of the early warfare having subsided, each of the tribes and their sub-sections was only concerned with its individual affairs. This isolation prevented the several tribes from consolidating their forces against the original inhabitants of Canaan.

The Canaanites had before the invasion by the Israelites already been in possession of sacrificial altars, and of places for pilgrimage which were superintended by ignorant custodians. The high mountains, bordered by pleasant valleys, were already invested with sacred attributes. Mount Carmel had long been looked upon as a holy spot whence the heathen priests announced their oracles. Mount Tabor was likewise regarded as holy. At the foot of Hermon, in a fine fruitful valley, there stood a sanctuary dedicated to Baal Gad or Baal Hermon. After the conquest these shrines were probably in the first instance only

visited by those strangers who had cast their lot with the Israelites; but their example was soon followed by the ignorant portion of their Hebrew companions. In the interior of the country where the people could not discriminate between paganism and the divine law of Israel, they adhered to the Egyptian superstitions, and were prone to join in the sacrificial rites of the pagan idolaters. The north, beyond Mount Tabor, likewise contained groups of the Canaanite population. The Danites, whose neglected treatment has already been noticed, were stationed in the centre of the Amorites. Their tenure of land was insignificant in extent. The tribes of Judah and Simeon were completely cut off from the other tribes. They were placed among pagans, whose occupations were divided between those of the shepherd and the freebooter. The Jebusites formed a barrier between the two southern tribes and their northern brethren. This division between the tribes was only removed after the conquest of Jebus (the city subsequently named Jerusalem). If Joshua in his declining years beheld with satisfaction the realisation of the Patriarchal promises, this satisfaction was not without its alloy. As in the lives of individuals, so in the lives of nations, the practical turn of events is liable to disappoint all anticipations. It is true the land of Canaan now belonged to the Israelites; but their conquests were of a precarious nature, and could again be wrested from them by a combined attack on the part of the dispossessed natives. The closing days of Joshua's life were therefore troubled by the consideration of this dangerous contingency, and by the fact that he had no successor whom the several tribes, especially the tribe of Ephraim, might be willing to follow. His death left the people in a state of utter bereavement, and they did not seem able to fathom the depth of the national loss. No such grief took hold of them as was evinced at the death of their first leader.

Yet there remained one ideal which Joshua bequeathed to the people—the prospect and the expectation that at some future time the entire land would become their undivided property. Hopes to which a people cling persistently carry within themselves the chances of fulfilment. Severe trials continued, however, to await them before the ideal of an undivided possession of Canaan could be fully accomplished.

## CHAPTER III.

### NEIGHBOURING NATIONS.

The Phœnicians, Aramæans, Philistines, Idumæans—Their Customs and Mythology—The Moabites and Ammonites—Intercourse of the Israelites with their Neighbours and Adoption of their Manners—Disintegration of the Tribes—Consequent Weakness—Temporary Deliverers.

THE sons of Israel, who had already been severely tried in Egypt, seemed destined to undergo trials still more severe. Their new scene of activity was surrounded by various nations, and they could only have escaped the influences of their surroundings either by destroying the homes of the bordering populations, or by being endowed with the power of resisting every temptation. The neighbouring Phœnicians, Canaanites, Aramæans, Philistines, Idumæans, Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, Arabs, and half-castes of Arabs, had each their own peculiar customs, manners, and religious observances. The tribes came into more or less close contact with their neighbours, and were soon dominated by the same law of attraction and assimilation, which is felt even in more cultured spheres. Hence arose the strange phenomenon during a prolonged period of Israel's history, that the nation forfeited every species of self-dependence; and even after regaining it, relapsed, and repeatedly passed through similar alternations.

These changes eventually gave shape and tenacity to the character of the people. In the interim, however, Israel became intimately united with the Phœnicians; the northern tribes of Asher,

Zebulon and Issachar stood in especially close connection with them. This people, particularly in Sidon, had already attained a high degree of culture when the Israelites entered Canaan. But from an ethical and a religious point of view they were as backward as the most uncultured races of men, though in this regard they were on a higher level than the Egyptians.

The Canaanites worshipped the male and female divinities, Baal and Astarte, who in some cities were designated by the names of Adonis and Baaltis. Baal was intended to be a personification of the sun, and Astarte of the moon; they did not, however, figure as luminous beings within the celestial space, but as the procreative powers of nature. The Canaanites also worshipped the then known seven planets termed *Cabiri, i.e.* the Mighty; as an eighth god they adored Ashmun, the restorer of health, who was depicted as a serpent. The rites by which men and women dedicated themselves to the male and female deities were of a loathsome description. The degraded priestesses of the temple were termed "consecrated women" (*Kedeshoth*).

In honour of Astarte half-frantic youths and men mutilated themselves, and wore female attire. They then wandered about as beggars, collecting aid for their sanctuary, or rather for their priests, and were called "holy men" (*Kedeshim*). Such proceedings formed a main part of the religious discipline among the Phœnicians, and their profanities were constantly displayed before the Israelites.

The southern tribes, on the other hand, maintained friendly relations with the Philistines. This people had emigrated from Caphtor (Cydonia), a town in the island of Crete, and their territory had three ports—Gaza in the south, Ashdod (Azotus) in the north, and Ascalon, midway

between these two towns. In the interior the Philistines occupied the cities of Gath and Ekron. This group of five cities (Pentapolis) formed a small district, extending as far as the Egyptian frontier, and its population acquired much power and influence. On this account the Greeks and the Egyptians designated the entire country by the name of Palestine (*i.e.*, land of the Philistines). Most probably the Philistines were seafarers and merchants like the Phœnicians. With these occupations, however, they combined the lust of conquest, whilst the Phœnicians, on the contrary, confined themselves to peaceful pursuits.

The Philistines, having a narrow sea-board, were induced to seek territorial extension on the eastern side. The religious discipline of this people was essentially similar to that of the other Canaanites, and agreed, in fact, with that of the different nations of antiquity. They reverenced the procreative power of nature under the name of Dagon. This deity was depicted in a form, half human, half piscine.

The Philistines had numerous soothsayers, wizards, and cloud-seers (*Meonenim*), who predicted future events from various auguries.

With the Idumæans the Israelites had less intercourse. The territory of the former extended from Mount Seir to the Gulf of the Red Sea. It is thought that at a remote time they navigated this sea, and traded with Arabia. Their mountains contained metals, including gold. The Idumæans had the reputation of being sagacious and practical. In early ages they were governed by kings, who apparently were elective. On the north side of the Idumæans, to the east of the Dead Sea, the Moabites and the Ammonites were neighbours of the tribes of Reuben and Gad. Their lascivious idolâtry was also dedicated to Baal of Mount Peor. Among the Ammonites, Baal was called Milcom or

Malcom. Besides this deity the god Chemosh was worshipped by these two nations. Amidst such surroundings the Israelites could not well preserve their own political independence, and much less their intellectual identity; nor could they keep midway between isolation and social intercourse among populations akin to them in language and descent.

From the first the Israelites had as many antagonists as neighbours. These, it is true, had no conception that Israel's doctrines tended to effect the destruction of their gods, altars, and sacred groves —the abolition, in fact, of senseless idolatry. Nor were they able to discriminate between their own sensuous condition and the lofty, hidden aims of the invading Israelites. The old inhabitants simply abhorred the new comers, who had entered with drawn swords to deprive them of their territories. In facing overt or secret enemies the Israelites had no choice between resorting to exterminating warfare or making amicable concessions. Warfare on a large scale was not even practicable; since Joshua's death they had no accredited leader, and no plan for concerted action. They certainly did not seem to desire more than to live on neighbourly terms with the adjoining populations. This temporary truce might easily satisfy the Canaanites and Phœnicians, who were mainly concerned in keeping the high roads open for commercial dealings. The Idumæans, the Philistines, and the Moabites were the only nations who sought to do injury to the Israelites. Every recollection of the troubles endured in the desert made the Israelites more desirous of living in undisturbed tranquillity. For this reason they took but a slight interest in the affairs of their fellow-tribesmen, and they allowed their sons and daughters to intermarry with non-Israelites. These alliances were most frequent among the border-tribes, who found a strong element of security in this intimate union with

their neighbours, the more so as in the early days of their history such intermarriages were not yet placed under the ban of interdiction. The tribes in the interior—for instance, those of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin—were less in favour of intermarriages; least of all did the exclusive Levites approve of a union with non-Israelites. From an intermarriage with the heathen to a participation in their idolatrous rites there was but one step.

In rural districts the Israelites could easily be led to join the pagan rites, as their memories were still attached to Egyptian superstitions, and they were unable to discriminate between pagan discipline, and the divine doctrine of Sinai. By degrees this idolatrous worship gained ground among the majority of the Israelites, who were fascinated by the arts and accomplishments of the Phœnicians.

The Sanctuary in Shiloh, where the sons of Aaron, together with the Levites, officiated at sacerdotal rites, was not situated in a sufficiently central position for tribes settled at great distances, nor was it in high favour among those living within an easier reach. The neighbouring tribes were displeased with the arrogance and the egotism of the sons of Ephraim. In the early stages of Israel's history the performance of sacrifices was held to be an essential part of divine worship and of communion with the Deity. Persons clinging to the observance of sacrificial rites either erected domestic altars, or connected themselves with a temple in their vicinity. This tendency remained unchecked, as there was no chief or leader to inculcate a proper adoration of the Godhead. The Levites, who were intended to be the teachers of the people, had been widely dispersed among the different tribes, and dwelt chiefly in the smaller towns. As they owned no lands, and were generally destitute, they exerted no great influence upon the people.

One poor Levite, a grandson of the great Lawgiver, took priestly service at the shrine of a newly-manufactured idol, in order to obtain food and raiment. The further spread of such worship was favoured among the Israelites by the force of sensuality, by habit, and by the love of imitation.

At this time the marvellous occurrences in Egypt and in the desert were still vividly remembered by the several tribes, and formed a link of fellowship among them, notwithstanding the disintegrating effect of idolatry. The ancestral history continued to be handed down from father to son, and revived the sentiment of a common nationality. An individual or an entire family immersed in affliction would then ask, "Where are all His miracles of which our fathers told us, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?" *

The events witnessed on Mount Sinai remained engraven upon the hearts of thoughtful men; nor were warning voices wanting to recall the older days of divine mercy, and to rebuke the people on account of their idolatry. It appears that the utterances of reproof came from the Levites. They, as custodians of the tables of the covenant, and as servants in the Sanctuary of Shiloh, stood up in days of national misfortune, and on other occasions, to expose the corruption of their people. Sometimes they might succeed in making a deep impression when they described past glories or present sorrows; but the effect of such addresses was only evanescent. The people were always predisposed to fraternise with strangers and to imitate their practices. One adverse condition produced another. The selfishness of the men of Ephraim induced their brother tribes to care only for self-preservation. The chances of uniting the Israelites under one commander were neglected. This again

* Judges vi. 13.

drove the divided tribes to confederacies with the pagans, and they became more closely united with them through the ties of family and of superstitious worship; hence came internal disunion and national degeneracy. The indigenous population of Palestine no sooner discovered the influence they were able to exercise, than they began to treat the Israelites as intruders, who should be humbled, if not crushed altogether.

Sorrowful days befell the Israelites after Joshua had closed his eyes. One tribe after another was reduced to servitude. At length, when the sufferings of the people became unendurable, public-spirited men came to the rescue, and performed deeds of remarkable valour. These heroic deliverers were commonly known as "judges" (*Shofetim*). On an emergency they would lead one tribe, or several tribes to battle; but they were incapable of uniting the entire people of Israel, or of keeping the collected tribes under permanent control. It was altogether beyond the ability of these deliverers to bring order into this national disorganisation, or to abolish the abuse of idolatry, and enforce a strict observance of religion. They, in fact, shared the failings of their age, and had only a faint comprehension of the Sinaitic doctrines.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE JUDGES.

Animosity of the Idumæans—Othniel, a Deliverer—Eglon, King of Moab—The Canaanite King, Jabin—Sisera, his General—The Prophetess and Poetess Deborah—Barak—Victory near Tabor—Early Hebrew Poetry—Sufferings through Nomads—The Hero Gideon (Jerubbaal)—Victory in the Plain of Jezreel—Commencement of Prosperity—Abimelech—Feud with the Shechemites—Jair the Gileadite—Hostilities of the Amalekites and the Philistines—Jephthah—Samson—Zebulunite Judges.

OTHNIEL, the son of Kenaz, a brother, and at the same time son-in-law of Caleb, was the first warrior-judge. Having collected a brave band of combatants, he advanced against an Idumæan* king, and delivered the southern tribes of Judah and Simeon. But his enterprise did not bring the least advantage to the rest of the tribes, and remained almost unknown on the other side of Mount Ephraim. The daring act of the Benjamite, Ehud the son of Gera, was of greater significance. The Israelites being oppressed by the Moabites, Ehud did not immediately invite his injured companions to make an open attack upon the foe. He first sought to put the hostile king, Eglon, out of the way. One day he presented himself before the king under the pretext that he was the bearer of a gift from his people in token of their submission. Being alone with Eglon, he thrust into the body of his victim a double-edged sword, and fled after having locked the door of the audience chamber. He then summoned the men of Ephraim and Benjamin, and occupied the fords of the Jordan so as to cut off the retreat of the Moabites, who had established themselves on the

*Judges iii. 8 and 10 must be read "king of *Edom*" (אדום) instead of *Aram* (ארם).

west side of that river. The Moabites were then totally routed. After this victory the western tribes of Israel remained for a long time unmolested by the people of Moab.

From another quarter, the Israelites were harassed by the Philistines. Shamgar the son of Anath, probably of the tribe of Benjamin, chastised the assailants with a weapon extemporised out of an ox-goad. Such sporadic acts of bravery, inadequate to improve the situation of the Israelites, tended only to aggravate their troubles. Jabin, a Canaanite king, joined by some of the neighbouring rulers, seemed bent upon exterminating the Israelites. The high roads became insecure, and wayfarers had to seek devious by-ways. At that juncture, Israel was without a leader, or a man of tried courage. A woman, a poetess and prophetess, Deborah the wife of Lapidoth, then came forward as "a mother in Israel." With her inspiriting speech she animated the timorous people, and changed them from cowards into heroes. Urged by Deborah, Barak the son of Abinoam, reluctantly undertook to lead the Israelites against the enemy; and, at her bidding, the most valiant men in Israel joined the national army. Meeting together near Mount Tabor, they discomfited the Canaanites who were commanded by Jabin's general, the hitherto unvanquished Sisera. The power of Jabin was henceforth broken. The commander himself had now to flee for his life, and was slain by Jael, the wife of Heber, a member of the Kenite tribe which maintained an amicable alliance with the Israelites. In a hymn known as "The Song of Deborah," the praises were sung of this unexpected victory, and of the mercy which God had bestowed upon His people. But these hostilities had not yet reached their end. The restless nations of the neighbourhood continued to deal heavy blows upon the Israelites, who either were

too weak or too disunited to resist such attacks. The roving Midianites periodically ravaged Palestine. At each harvest time they would cross the Jordan with their irresistible hordes, bringing with them their tents, their camels, and their herds. They came "like a flight of locusts," emptied the barns, led off the flocks, the herds and the asses, and then quitted the impoverished and despoiled land. The rich and fertile plain of Jezreel, with the adjacent northern and southern territory, was especially exposed to these incursions. To save their scanty means of subsistence, the owners of the land concealed their provisions in caverns and other hiding places. The insignificant gleanings of wheat had to be threshed in the openings of rocks. In their severe trials the tribes prayed unto the God of their fathers, and assembled at Shiloh, where they were reproved for their sinfulness by "a man of God"—probably a Levite—who reminded them that their misfortunes were the consequence of their iniquities. Exhortations of this kind seem to have made a deep impression upon at least one man of note. This man was Jerubbaal, also named Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh. In Ophrah, his native place, in a grove consecrated to Baal or to Astarte, there was an altar, which Jerubbaal destroyed, and he then raised another in honour of the God of Israel. The men of Ophrah, enraged at this sacrilege, were about to stone Jerubbaal, but he gathered round him tribesmen of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, and encamped at Endor to the north of Mount Moreh; there he dismissed the timid and faint-hearted, retaining only a picked force of 300 warriors. In the dead of night he fell upon the sleeping enemy, whom he terrified with the shrill blast of horns and the brandishing of burning torches, amidst the war-cry, "For God and for Gideon." The unprepared Midianites were utterly routed, and were forced to retreat across the

Jordan. During many ages "the day of Midian" was remembered among the triumphs which a handful of brave Israelites had accomplished.

Gideon then pursued on the other side of the Jordan the two fugitive Midianite kings, Zebah and Zalmunna, chastised those Israelites who refused him and his famishing warriors the needful provisions, and inflicted upon the Midianites a crushing defeat from which they never recovered. The people thus delivered offered to make him their king, an honour which he declined, both for himself and his descendants. It appears that he made Ophrah a centre for pilgrims, to the detriment of the less conveniently situated sanctuary of Shiloh. This aroused the jealousy of the men of Ephraim, who, after the death of the hero, were involved in violent conflicts with the men of the tribe of Manasseh. Gideon had, after his great victories, carried into the land the rich treasures of the vanquished enemies. The towns of Israel became seats of wealth and luxury. Phœnician caravans could henceforth safely journey through the land. Covenants were concluded with the trafficking strangers, who were placed under the protection of the tutelar Baal-Berith (Baal of the Covenant). The jealous men of Ephraim, who sought to foment dissension among the seventy sons and grandsons of Gideon, found in Abimelech, one of his sons, an unscrupulous ally. This Abimelech, being the son of a woman of Shechem, was elected by the Shechemites to be their leader. His first act was to put his brothers to death. Only Jotham, the youngest of them, escaped. On Mount Gerizim, Jotham pronounced his trenchant parable of the trees, who, in their search of a ruler, met with refusals from the fruitful olive, fig, and vine trees. The prickly bramble (Atad) was the only one who would accept the government; but he warned the trees that if they refused to acknowledge him as

ruler, he would send forth a fire to consume all the trees of the Lebanon. The parable found its application in the subsequent hostilities between the men of Shechem and Abimelech, whose cruelties ended in his death at the hand of his own armour-bearer.

After the fall of Abimelech the cis-Jordanic tribes seem to have retrograded, while the men of Manasseh or Gilead, on the other side of the Jordan, invaded the high land of the Hauran and took possession of sixty rock-built cities. This district then received the name Havvoth Jair. At that time the Israelites suffered a shock from two sides, which caused further disintegration among them. On the one hand they were attacked by the Ammonites, and on the other by the Philistines. These attacks distracted them and rendered them incapable of resistance. The Ammonites appear to have driven the Israelites from their open places, after which they attacked the strongholds. These incursions were successful against the tribes of Ephraim and Judah.

On the opposite side, the Philistines assailed the neighbouring tribes of Israel, and sought to subdue them. They first attacked the tribe of Dan; nor did they spare the tribes of Benjamin and Judah. Even these disasters did not arouse the tribes to make a combined resistance. The trans-Jordanic tribes had turned to the Ephraimites for help; but the latter took no part in the contest, either from selfishness or because the inhabitants of Shechem and other Ephraimite towns had been enfeebled by Abimelech.

In those troubled times there arose two deliverers, who drove off the enemy and procured temporary relief. Jephthah and Samson appeared as adventurers who maintained order, and brought their powers to bear, as much for evil as for good. They both alike displayed an extraordinary activity;

But while Jephthah was a warrior who conquered his enemies by warlike measures, Samson, though endowed with great strength and daring, appears to have overcome his enemies more by stratagems and unexpected attacks.

Jephthah, the Gileadite, of the tribe of Manasseh, having been banished by his tribesmen, began to lead the life of a highwayman. Daring associates, who thought little of law and order, joined him and appointed him their leader. When attacked by the Ammonites, the men of Gilead remembered their outlawed kinsman, whose bold deeds had come to their knowledge. Some of the elders of his tribe went to him and urged him to aid them with his troops, and help them to expel the enemy from their territories. Full of proud indignation Jephthah rebuked them with the words, "You hated me, and drove me from my father's house; wherefore do you come to me now when it goes ill with you?" * The Gileadite elders, however, entreated him more urgently, and promised, if he should vanquish the enemy, that they would recognise him as chief in Gilead. Upon this Jephthah determined to return with them. He then sent a formal message to the Ammonites, demanding that they should desist from their incursions into the territory of the Israelites; and when they refused on the pretext of ancient rights, he traversed the districts of Gilead and Manasseh in order to enlist warriors. Jephthah knew well how to gather many brave youths round him, and with these he proceeded against the Ammonites, defeated them, and captured twenty of their cities. After Jephthah had gained these decisive victories the Ephraimites began a quarrel with him; and as previously, in the case of the heroic Gideon, they were displeased that he had obtained victories without their aid.

* Judges xi. 7.

This led to a civil war, for Jephthah was not so submissive to the proud Ephraimites as the judge of Ophrah had been. The men of Ephraim crossed the Jordan, near the town of Zaphon, and assumed a warlike attitude; but Jephthah punished them for their presumption, defeated them, and blocked their road of retreat on the banks of the Jordan. Jephthah might have strengthened the tribes beyond the Jordan, but his rule only lasted six years, and he left no son to succeed him. He had only one daughter, and of her a deeply moving story has been preserved, which describes how she became the victim of her father's rash vow.

Whilst the hero of Gilead was subduing the Ammonites by force of arms, Samson was fighting the Philistines, who claimed, from the tribe to which Samson belonged, the coast-line of Joppa, formerly a part of their possessions. The tribe of Dan smarted under their yoke, but had not the power to effect a change. Samson was not supported in his enterprises by the various tribes as Jephthah had been. They greatly feared the Philistines; and so Samson was compelled to have recourse to stratagems, and could only harm the enemy by unexpected onslaughts. This mode of warfare was censured in the words, "Dan shall judge his people like one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be as a serpent by the way, and as an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backwards." *

Samson is supposed to have fought during twenty years for Israel, without, however, improving the state of affairs. Long after his death the Philistines kept the upper hand over the tribes of Dan and Benjamin, and also over Judah and Ephraim. The rule of the Philistines pressed with increasing weight upon Israel. After Samson there arose successively three other deliverers, two in the tribe of

* Genesis xlix. 16, 17.

Zebulun, and one in the tribe of Ephraim; but their deeds were of so insignificant a character that they have not been deemed worthy of mention. Of the two hero-judges in Zebulun, the names and the territory or town in which they were buried have alone been preserved: Ibzan, of Bethlehem in Zebulun, and Elon, of the town of Aijalon. Also of the Ephraimite judge, Abdon, son of Hillel, the Pirathonite, little more is known. It is not even stated against what enemies they waged war; but the fact that the men of Zebulun, who at first lived far away from the sea, afterwards removed their dwelling-places to the shore, leads us to suppose that they supplanted the Canaanite inhabitants.

## CHAPTER V.

### ELI AND SAMUEL.

Importance of the Judges in Command—Public Feeling—Sanctuary in Shiloh—Eli and his Sons—Defeat by the Philistines—Capture of the Ark—Destruction of Shiloh and the Sanctuary—Flight of the Aaronites and Levites—Death of Eli—The Ark in Philistia and in Kirjath Jearim—Prophecy re-awakened—Samuel in Ramah—The Order of Prophets or Singers—Popular revulsion—The tribe of Judah—Repeated attacks of the Philistines—Meeting at Mizpah—Samuel's activity—Nob as a place of Worship—Increase in power of the Philistines and Ammonites—Tribes desire to have a King—Samuel's course of action.

1100?—1067 B.C.

THE twelve or thirteen warrior-judges had been incapable of keeping off the hostile neighbours of Israel for any length of time, much less had they ensured the permanent safety of the country. Even the more celebrated Barak, with all his enthusiasm, and Gideon and Jephthah with their warlike courage, could only succeed in uniting a few of the tribes, but were unable to secure or restore the union of the entire people. The warrior-judges were, in fact, only of importance so long as they repulsed the enemy, averted danger, and ensured safety in daily life. They wielded no real power, not even over the tribes to which their prowess brought help and freedom; nor did they possess any rights by which they could enforce obedience. The isolation and division amongst the several tribes continued, in spite of temporary victories; the actual weakness of the country increased rather than diminished. Samson's "serpent-like attacks and adder's bites" did not deter the Philistines from considering the tribes within reach as their subjects, or more correctly speaking as their slaves, nor did it prevent them from ill-treating

the Israelites. Jephthah's victories over the Ammonites did not cause the enemy to relinquish their claims over the eastern tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh.

After the deaths of Jephthah and Samson the state of affairs became still more dismal. It was, however, precisely this sense of extreme weakness which led to a gradual recovery of strength. Several tribal leaders must have come to the conclusion that this connection with neighbouring populations, and the adoption of idolatrous customs, had only brought the people to the verge of ruin. The remembrance of the God of their fathers no doubt once more revived in their hearts and awakened their sleeping consciences to a sense of duty. The men who had been thus aroused called to mind the Sanctuary dedicated to their God at Shiloh, and they repaired thither.

Towards the close of the judges' period, Shiloh once more became a general rallying-point. Here the Levites, the guardians of the Law, still resided, and they used their opportunities to urge, at the meetings held in times of distress, that a denial of Israel's God and the worship of Baal had brought all this misery upon the people. There also lived in Shiloh a priest who was worthy of his ancestors Aaron and Phineas. He was the first Aaronite, after a considerable time, whose name has been recorded by posterity. He was simply called Eli, without the addition of his father's name, and the only title of honour he bore was that he was a priest at Shiloh. Eli is described as a venerable old man, on whose lips were words of gentleness, and who was incapable of giving utterance to severe censure, even to his unworthy sons.

This aged man could not fail to exercise a beneficial influence, and win warm adherents to the Law which he represented, if only by the example

of his moral worth and by the holy life he led. When Shiloh was visited in ever-increasing numbers by desponding worshippers from the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin, as also from the tribes on the trans-Jordanic side, some were murmuring at the sufferings imposed upon them, and others complaining of the hard treatment they endured at the hands of the Ammonites; but Eli would exhort them to rely on the ever ready help of the God of Israel and to give up the worship of strange gods.

By such exhortations he might have brought about a better state of mind among his hearers, if the respect felt for him had been likewise enjoyed by his two sons, Hophni and Phineas. They, however, did not walk in the ways of their father; and when the people and Eli were overtaken by severe misfortunes, these were supposed to be a punishment of heaven for the sins of Eli's sons, and for the weak indulgence displayed by the High Priest.

The Philistines still held sway over the tribes in their vicinity, and made repeated attacks and raids on Israel's lands. The tribes attacked became so far skilled in warfare that they no longer sought to oppose the enemy in irregular skirmishes, but met them in open battle. The Israelites encamped on the hill Eben-ha-Ezer, and the Philistines in the plain near Aphek. As the latter possessed iron war-chariots they proved superior to the Israelites, of whom four thousand are supposed to have fallen in battle. The Israelite warriors, however, did not take to flight, but kept to their posts.

In accordance with the counsel of the elders, the Ark of the Covenant was brought from Shiloh, it being believed that its presence would ensure victory. Eli's sons were appointed to escort it. Nevertheless, the second battle was even more disastrous than the first. The Israelite troops fled in utter confusion; the Ark of the Covenant

was captured by the Philistines, and Hophni and Phineas, who attended it, were killed. The Philistines pursued the flying troops and spread terror in every direction. Breathless with fear, a messenger of evil tidings arrived in Shiloh, and brought the sad news to the anxious people and to the high priest Eli who was sitting at the gate.

The news that the Ark of the Covenant had been captured affected the aged priest even more than the death of his sons; he dropped down dead from his seat. It now seemed that all glory had departed from the house of Israel. The victorious Philistines, no longer content to make foraging expeditions through the country, forced their way from west to east until they reached the district of Shiloh. They destroyed that town, together with the Tabernacle which had been a witness to the blissful days of Moses. A later poet describes this time of trial with a heavy heart.*

The strength and courage of the people were entirely overcome by this defeat. Those tribes who until now had been foremost in every encounter, were crushed. The tribe of Ephraim suffered—though not undeservedly, most severely—by the overthrow of the Sanctuary, which in Eli's time had been recognised as a place for popular meetings. Every chance of union, especially amongst the northern tribes, seemed to be cut off, although they had not been concerned in the disastrous strife.

The Philistines were impressed with the idea that by capturing the Ark of the Covenant—which they supposed to be the safeguard of the Israelites,—and by destroying the Sanctuary, they had vanquished the Israelite people; but they were painfully undeceived. As soon as they had carried off the Ark of the Covenant to the neighbouring

* See Psalm lxxviii. 60-64; Jeremiah vii. 12.

town of Ashdod, the country was visited by various plagues. In their terror, the Philistine princes determined to follow the advice of their priests and magicians, and send back the Ark, accompanied by expiatory offerings, after it had been in their possession for seven months. It was accordingly sent over the boundaries and taken to the town of "Kirjath Jearim" (Forest Town) situated on a hill, where it was guarded by the Levites of the district; but it was so little missed by the people that decades passed before they even remembered their loss. In the eyes of the untutored Israelites neither the contents nor the great age of the tablets of the Law preserved in the Ark were of great importance. Meanwhile these misfortunes — the destruction and loss of the Sanctuary at Shiloh—had aroused a desire for a better state of things. Those who were not utterly indifferent could perceive that the true cause of the evil lay in the religious and political dissensions. The Levites who had escaped during the destruction of Shiloh and had settled in other towns, probably prepared the public mind for a return to the belief in God. Perhaps also the return of the Ark of the Covenant from the land of the Philistines exercised an animating influence and raised hopes of better days. The longing for the God of Israel became daily more widely diffused, and the want of a steadfast and energetic leader was keenly felt,—a leader who would bring the misguided people into the right path, and raise up those who were bowed down with sorrow. And just at the right moment a man appeared who brought about a crisis in Israel's history.

Samuel, the son of Elkanah, was the man who reunited the long-sundered bonds of communal life amongst the Israelites, and thereby averted the threatening decay and internal corruption. His

greatness is illustrated by the circumstance that he was not only regarded second to Moses in point of years, but also in prophetic importance.

Samuel was an elevated character. He displayed the same unbending conscientiousness towards himself as towards others. Living amidst the people, coming into daily contact with them, he surpassed the men of his time in love of God, purity of heart, and unselfishness. In addition to these qualities he was distinguished by the gift of prophecy. His spiritual eye pierced the clouds which hid the future. He proclaimed his prophetic visions, and they came to pass. Samuel was descended from one of the most distinguished Levitical families, from the same Korah who had incited the rebellion against Moses in days of old. Samuel inherited intensity of feeling from his mother Hannah, whose fervent though inaudible prayer has formed an example for all ages. At a tender age he was placed by his mother as one of the attendant Levites in the Sanctuary at Shiloh. He had daily to open its gates; he took part in the sacrificial service, and he passed his nights within the precincts of the tabernacle.

At an early age the gift of prophecy, unknown to himself, was awakened within him. Whilst wrapped in deep sleep he heard himself called from the inner recess of the Sanctuary when the Ark of the Covenant was still placed there. This was Samuel's first vision, and happened previous to the defeat of the Israelites by the Philistines, the capture of the Ark of the Covenant, the death of Eli and his two sons, and the destruction of the Sanctuary. Samuel's services ceased with the last-named event, and he returned to his father's house at Ramah in deep affliction.

The misfortunes which had befallen his people, and especially the ruin of Shiloh, made an overpowering impression on Samuel, whose youthful

mind aspired to the highest duties of man. In the Levitical circle in which he had grown up, it was a fixed belief that the trials undergone by the people resulted from their denial of the God of Israel. To have no Sanctuary was considered equivalent to being without God.

The sacred writings enshrined in the Ark enjoined righteousness, justice, mercy, and the equality of all Israelites without distinction of class, as commanded by God; but little or nothing was said of sacrifices. Samuel, who by many centuries was nearer to the rise of the Israelites than were the later prophets, was like them convinced of the fact that God had not ordained the deliverance of His people solely in order that they might sacrifice to Him alone, but rather that they might carry His laws into effect. The contents of these records of the Law embodied the will of God which the Israelites were to follow with implicit obedience. This Law was vivified in Samuel; and he was the medium by which it became indelibly impressed on the people; to give effect to its teaching was the task of Samuel's life.

The fact of having no Sanctuary was, as has been shown, deemed equivalent to being abandoned by God. Gradually, however, Samuel seems to have taken up a different train of thought—*No Sanctuary, no burnt offerings.* "Is the sacrifice absolutely necessary for a pure worship of God and for a holy life in His ways?" This thought became matured within him; and later, on a fitting occasion, he preached on this theme thus. The sacrifices are of little importance; the fat of rams cannot win God's approbation; in what, then, should service of God consist? "In a strict obedience to all that He has commanded." During his sojourn in Shiloh Samuel had not only made himself acquainted with the contents of the stone tablets which were kept in the Ark of the Sanctuary, but

he became also versed in the books of the Laws emanating from Moses, and he was entirely filled with their spirit. The living word was the means which he employed to attain his end, for he was endowed with impressive eloquence. From time to time he had prophetic dreams and visions. These revealed to him that his convictions were not the mere suggestions of his own mind or heart, but were sanctioned or inspired by a higher Being. The prophetic inspirations consisted of teachings or commands; they were combined with an unveiling of the near future, and bore the character of revelations. Animated by his prophetic visions, Samuel communicated them to his hearers, probably at his native place, Ramah, where his reputation had preceded him. These communications, which foreshadowed extraordinary events beyond the limits of common foresight, he seems to have expressed in orations and in rhythmic utterances abounding in poetic metaphors and similes.

Whilst in Shiloh, he had been repeatedly vouchsafed prophetic visions, and these had been confirmed. It soon went forth in the environs of Ramah and in ever-increasing circles, that a prophet had arisen in Israel, and that the spirit of God, which had rested on Moses and had led him to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt, had now descended on the son of Elkanah. In the interval, during a long succession of centuries, no prophet, in the full sense of the word, had arisen. The fact that God had raised up a second Moses encouraged the hope that better times were at hand. Samuel's first endeavour was to reclaim the nation from the idolatrous worship of Baal and Astarte, and from a superstitious belief in the oracular powers of the Teraphim.

The desire of a portion of the people to abandon their evil ways materially assisted Samuel in his efforts. His irresistible eloquence was concentrated

in the one theme that the gods of the heathen were nonentities who could neither help nor save. He declared that it was a folly and a sin to consult the lying oracles and the jugglery of the soothsayers; and that God would never desert the nation whom He had chosen. These words found a powerful response in the hearts of those who heard them. Samuel did not wait for the people to come to him in order that he might address them, but he went forth to them. He travelled through the whole land, appointed public meetings, and announced to the multitudes the lessons revealed in him by the spirit of God; and the people, stirred by his prophetic utterances, and roused from the lethargy into which they had been plunged ever since their misfortunes had commenced, now began to revive. The right man had come, whose words could be followed in days of care and trouble. The eyes of the nation naturally turned towards him.

Had Samuel stood alone, he would scarcely have been enabled to effect so desirable a transformation. But he had a number of assistants on whom he could rely. The Levites, whose home was in Shiloh, had fled when the town and the Sanctuary were destroyed. They had been accustomed to surround the altar and to serve in the Sanctuary. They knew no other occupation. What should they do now in their dispersion? Another place of worship had not yet been founded to which they might have turned. Several Levites therefore joined Samuel. His greatness had impressed them when he lived in Shiloh, and he now employed them to execute his plans. Gradually their numbers increased until they formed a band of associates (*Chebel*) or Levitical guild (*Kehilah*). These disciples of prophecy, headed by Samuel, contributed materially to the change of views and manners among the people.

Another circumstance served at that time to

raise the nation from its apathy. During the entire period of the Judges' rule the men of Judah had not taken the slightest share in public events. Removed far away in their caves and deserts, they seemed to have no part in the life of the other tribes. They called themselves by the name of Jacob. Utterly secluded, they led a separate existence, untouched by the sorrows and joys, the battles and conquests, of the tribes living on both sides of the Jordan. The Jebusites, who possessed the district between the mountains of Ephraim and Judah, formed a barrier between these tribes and the Israelites dwelling in the north.

It was only the repeated incursions of the Philistines on Israel's territory which seem to have aroused the tribe of Judah, and forced it out of its retirement. It was probably to strengthen themselves against the attacks of their enemy, who sought to lay the yoke of serfdom on their necks, that the men of Judah stretched out a helping hand to the neighbouring tribes. Whatever circumstance may have influenced them, it is certain that in Samuel's days, the tribe of Judah with its dependency, the tribe of Simeon, took part in the common cause. Jacob and Israel, divided for many centuries since the first entry into Canaan, were now at length united. It was, without doubt, Samuel who brought about this union.

Judah's or Jacob's entry into history formed a new, more vigorous, and somewhat regenerating element. The tribe of Judah had founded but few towns, and had not developed town life in the territories it had acquired. The only city worthy of note was Hebron; the other places were villages for cattle-breeders. The refinement and the depravity resulting from the influence of the Philistines had remained unknown to the tribes of Judah and Simeon. The worship of Baal and Astarte, with its coarse and sensual rites, had found no followers

among them. They remained, for the most part, what they were on their entry into the land—simple shepherds, loving peace and upholding their liberty, without any desire for warlike fame or for making new conquests. The simple customs of patriarchal life seem to have lasted longer in Judah than elsewhere. This accession of strength and religious activity could certainly not have been rendered possible without Samuel's commanding and energetic intervention. The son of Elkanah, though no warrior, was looked upon as a firm supporter on whom both houses could lean. For many years Samuel, assisted by the prophetic order of Levites, pursued his active course with zeal and energy; the people regarded him as a ruler, and he, in fact, by his inspired zeal, led them on to conquest. A victory gained near Eben-ha-Ezer, where, many years before, the Philistines had overcome the Israelite troops and had carried off much booty, now produced a mighty effect—it revived the courage of the Israelites and humbled the Philistines.

During the next decade the people once more enjoyed the comforts of peace, and Samuel took measures that prosperity should not efface the good results of previous misfortunes. It was his earnest endeavour to consolidate the union between the tribes, which was the true foundation of their strength. Year after year he called together the elders of the people, explained their duties to them, and reminded them of the evil days which had befallen the Israelites through their godlessness, their intermarriages with strange nations, and their excesses of idolatry; he also warned them against a return to these errors. Such assemblies Samuel held by turns in the three towns which came into notice after the destruction of Shiloh—namely, in Bethel, in Gilgal, and in Mizpah, where prayers for victory over the Philistines had been offered up in the former

campaign. At Ramah, the place of his residence, frequent meetings of the various tribes took place; and here the elders sought his advice in all important matters. At divine services Samuel not only caused sacrifices to be offered up, but he employed the aid of the Levites to play on stringed instruments in order to arouse the devout feelings of the people.

Through him a new element was introduced into the divine service of the Israelites—viz., songs of praise. Samuel, the ancestor of the celebrated psalmists, the sons of Korah, was the first who composed songs of praise for divine service. His grandson, Heman, was considered the chief psalmist and musician, and ranked in fame next to Asaph and Jeduthun, who flourished in the subsequent generation. The charms of poetry and harmony were by Samuel brought to bear upon the service of religion, and they left a lasting and ennobling impression on the minds of the people. The employment of choirs of Levites and singers rendered the sacrificial rite of minor importance.

The priests, the sons of Aaron, took up a less respected position, and were to a certain extent neglected by Samuel. Achitub, a grandson of Eli, had saved himself after the destruction of Shiloh by taking refuge in the small town of Nob, near Jerusalem. He had carried away with him the high priests' garments; and various members of the house of Aaron, having assembled there, Nob became a sacerdotal town. Here Achitub appears to have erected an altar, and also a tabernacle on the model of the one which had been destroyed in Shiloh. He even appears to have made an Ark of the Covenant in Nob, instead of the one carried off by the Philistines. The Israelites apparently disregarded the fact that the new ark was wanting in the essential contents, the stone tablets of the Covenant.

Notwithstanding the eventful changes effected by Samuel through his great gifts and untiring energy, the condition of the people was anything but satisfactory. He had given especial attention to the central and southern districts, and had appointed his two sons, Joel and Abijah, to act as judges—the one in Beer-sheba, the other in Bethel—but the north was left unrepresented.

With increasing years Samuel could no longer display the same activity as in his youth and riper manhood. His sons were disliked, being accused of misusing their power and of accepting bribes. There were no men of energy amongst Samuel's followers, and thus the ties which held the people together gradually slackened. In addition it must be noted that just at this period the country of Israel's greatest enemies was transformed into a kingdom. The Philistines had either of their own free will chosen a king, or had been forced to do so by one of the rulers of their five cities. The town of Gath became the capital. The ambition of the Philistine king now turned in the direction of fresh conquests; he seems to have made successful attacks on the Phœnicians, and to have laid waste the town of Sidon. In consequence of their defeat the Sidonians took refuge in their ships, and on a rock which projected far out to sea they built a town which they called Zor Tyre, the city of the rock. Meanwhile the Philistines became possessors of the entire territory between Gaza and Sidon, and it seemed easy to them, with their increased power, to subjugate Israel; hence a fierce warfare ensued between them and the Israelites. The Ammonites also, who had been humiliated by Jephthah, now rose again under their warlike king Nahash, and began to invade the possessions of the tribes of Gad and half-Manasseh. Powerless to defend themselves, these tribes sent messengers to Samuel, entreating him to supply

efficient aid. They at the same time expressed a wish which, though entertained by the entire people, was deeply painful to the prophet. They demanded that a king should be placed at the head of the Israelite community, who could compel the various tribes to unite in joint action, and might lead them to battle and to victory. There was now to be a king in Israel. Samuel was amazed when he heard these demands. A whole people was to be dependent on the whims or the will of a single individual! Equality of all members of the people before God and the law, the entire independence of each family group under their patriarchal head, had become so identified with their mode of life, that any change in their condition seemed incomprehensible and fraught with the heaviest misfortunes.

It was now necessary to give a new direction to the destinies of the people. Samuel's clear intellect disapproved of the radical change; yet his inherent prophetic gift compelled him to accede. The kingdom of Israel was brought forth in pain: it was not the offspring of affection. It therefore did not take its natural place in the system of Israel's organisation, but was considered by more discerning minds as a disturbing innovation.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE APOGEE.

Establishment of a Kingdom—Saul—His Position and Character—His secret Election at Mizpah—Humiliating Condition of the Nation under the Philistines—Declaration of War—Assemblage in Gilgal—Battle of Michmash—Defeat of the Philistines—Severity of Saul—Victory over the Ammonites—Saul's Election as King confirmed—His Court and Attendants—His Officers and Standing Army — Victory over the Amalekites — Disputes between Saul and Samuel — Saul's Attacks on the neighbouring People — War with the Gibeonites — Place of Worship in Gibeon—War against the Philistines in the Valley of Tamarinths —Goliath and David — Meeting of Saul and David — Saul's Jealousy turns into Madness—The Persecution of David—Saul's last Battle against the Philistines — Defeat and Death.

1067—1055 B.C..

THE king who was placed at the head of the people through their own eager insistance and with the unwilling consent of the prophet, proved, more effectually than any objections could do, how little a monarchical constitution was fitted to realise the expectations founded on it; for the king, until his accession a simple and excellent man, with no thoughts of ambition or arbitrary power, became guilty of cruelty and inhumanity in order to assert his dignity.

By aid of the prophetic guidance, care was taken that he should not resemble the repulsive prototype drawn by Samuel, or become so independent as to place himself above all laws and rules, but that he should ever remain mindful of his lowly origin. Samuel did not select a king from the haughty tribe of Ephraim, lest he should act like Abimelech, who in his presumption and ambition had killed his own brothers and laid waste whole districts; but the king was chosen from the smallest

of the tribes, the tribe of Benjamin. His family, that of Matri, was one of the lowliest in Benjamin. His father, Kish, was not in any way distinguished; he was a simple countryman; and nothing could be said in his praise, except that he was an upright man. Saul was chosen because he was content to work at his plough, and watch the increase of his father's flocks. He had no thought beyond the village in which he was born, and barely an idea that there were human beings to whom it was pleasant to possess sovereign power. In his shyness he displayed the ways of a true peasant; these circumstances, and the personal qualities of Saul, seemed to be a security against any presumption or pride on the part of the first king of Israel.

The excitement attending the choice of a king made a pleasing impression. "See," said Samuel, "this is the man whom God has chosen as king; his like is not to be found in all Israel." Most of the bystanders, carried away by the solemn proceeding and by Saul's appearance, shouted, "Long live the king!" Samuel then anointed the newly-elected king with holy oil, by which he was supposed to be rendered invulnerable. The elders rejoiced that their heartfelt wish of having a king to rule over them was at length realised. They looked forward for the happy days to come. This choice of a king was an important epoch in the history of the Jewish people; it determined their entire future. Yet during the joyful and solemn proceedings, discord had already arisen. Some discontented people, probably Ephraimites, who had hoped to have a king chosen from their own ranks, loudly expressed their disappointment. "How can this man help us!" Whilst all the other elders, according to universal custom, brought the king gifts of homage, and a few of the most courageous followed him to

Gibeah to assist him against the enemies of Israel, the malcontents kept apart and refused their allegiance.

Saul's courage after his elevation to the throne must have greatly increased, for he felt himself guarded by God in his unexpected greatness. He now boldly looked at the task of opposing his mighty enemies and of settling the disorganised affairs of the commonwealth. The position of the people at his accession was very sad and humiliating, almost worse than in the days of the Judges. Their arms, such as bows and arrows, swords, &c., had been carried off by the victorious Philistines, who left no smith in the land to make fresh weapons. The newly-elected king had no sword,—the symbol of royalty among all nations and at all times. His election was probably conducted so secretly that the Philistines knew nothing of it. The Philistine tax-gatherers drew all the strength out of the country, and at the same time repressed every attempt at revolt. So greatly were the Israelites humbled that some of them had to accompany the Philistines on expeditions against their own brethren. Nought but a miraculous event could have saved them, and such an event was brought about by Saul with his son and kinsmen.

Saul's eldest son, Jonathan, was perhaps more worthy of the kingly dignity than his father. Modest and unselfish to a greater extent than his father, courageous even to the defiance of death, he combined with these qualities, an almost excessive kindliness and gentleness, which endeared him to all. These qualities would have been serious failings in a ruler who had to display a certain amount of firmness and severity. Jonathan was, besides, endowed with an enthusiastic nature, and this made him very attractive. He was truthful, and an enemy to all

deceit; he uttered his opinions freely, at the risk of displeasing, of losing his position and even his life, all which qualities made him a favourite with the people. Abner, the cousin of Saul, was of an entirely different disposition; he was a warrior of unbending strength, and possessed a considerable degree of artfulness. To the inexperienced king and the people he rendered important service in their distress. Surrounded by these and other faithful adherents of his family and by the tribe of Benjamin in general, who were proud to gain notoriety through him, Saul set forth on the unequal contest with the Philistines. Jonathan commenced hostilities. In the town of Gibeah, or Gibeah of Benjamin, lived the Philistine tax-gatherers, surrounded by a host of warriors. Jonathan attacked this post and killed the garrison. This was the first declaration of war; it was made at Saul's command, and with his full approval. The king now ordered that the trumpet-blast should sound throughout the land of Benjamin, and announce that the war with the Philistines had commenced. Many heard the news with joy, others with sadness and dismay.

All who had courage collected together in order to stand by their king, determined to aid him in casting off the disgrace of Israel, or to perish in the attempt. Those who were cowards escaped to the opposite side of Jordan, or hid in caverns, in clefts of the rocks, or in subterranean passages. A feeling of intense anxiety filled all minds as to the result of the contest. The meeting place of the Israelites was then in Gilgal, the town most remote from the land of the Philistines. This place of meeting had been appointed by the prophet Samuel. He had directed Saul to repair thither, and stay there seven days to await his arrival and further instructions. Gilgal probably contained the choir of musicians and prophets, whose psalms and songs inspired the Israelite warriors with martial courage and with a

trust in the deliverance of their fatherland. Meanwhile the Philistines prepared themselves for a war of extermination against the Israelites. The news of Jonathan's attack on their outposts had exasperated them; they were, however, more surprised than terrified. How could the cowardly weaponless, unarmed Israelites dare to attack the Philistines, their masters? A numerous band of warriors supported by cavalry passed through the valleys of the southern mountain range of Ephraim, and through the entire breadth of the land as far as Michmash; from this camping-place they spread their marauding bands in three directions; the most humiliating circumstance being that many Israelites were compelled to assist the Philistines in subduing their own tribesmen.

This was a critical time for the people of Israel. Whilst the Philistines were gradually pushing forward to Michmash, Saul, surrounded by the brave men of his tribe, awaited in Gilgal the prophet who was to give the warriors his inspired directions, and thus endow them with courage. But day after day passed, and Samuel did not appear. Every hour spent in idleness seemed to destroy the chance of a successful issue. Saul feared that the enemy would descend from the mountains into the valley, attack Gilgal, and destroy or put to flight the small body of Israelites. A few of his soldiers had already deserted, looking on Samuel's absence as an inauspicious omen. Saul, becoming impatient, determined to attack the enemy on the seventh day on his own responsibility. According to ancient practice, he made a sacrifice in order to propitiate the Deity, and to ensure his success in the battle. Just as he was preparing the burnt-offering, Samuel suddenly appeared and upbraided the king severely for being carried away by impatience. He resented this error with great severity, departed from Gilgal, and left Saul to his own resources—a hard blow for him, as he had reckoned

confidently on the prophet's assistance at this dangerous juncture. After Samuel had departed from Gilgal, Saul found it impossible to remain there. He therefore repaired with the remnant of his troops to Gibeah. Here he reviewed his soldiers, and found they did not amount to more than six hundred. It is not surprising that Saul and Jonathan became dispirited at the sight of this slight force, which was unarmed and had to fight the well-appointed armies of the enemy. Saul and Jonathan alone possessed swords. It was indeed a poor beginning to the newly-established kingdom. The most painful blow for Saul was that, through Samuel's absence, he was deprived of the means by which the people might ascertain the will of God.

Jonathan, however, made a good beginning at Gibeah, where Saul and his troops lay encamped, scarcely an hour's distance from Michmash, the site of the Philistine camp. Between the two armies lay a valley, but the road which led from one place to the other was impracticable, the valley being bordered by steep, almost perpendicular walls of rocks and precipices, which closed it up on the east till it became a mere gorge of about ten feet in width. On the west side, where the valley formed a wide pass, the Philistines had stationed their outposts. Thus the Philistines and Israelites could only come to an encounter in the narrow path. At last Jonathan determined to ascend the steepest part of the pass, and accompanied by his sword-bearer he climbed up on hands and feet the steep sharp points of the rock on the side of Michmash. One false step would have precipitated him into the depths below, but happily he and his man arrived safely at the highest point. When the Philistines beheld them they were not a little surprised that a path had been found on this rocky road to their camp. Deceived by this ruse, and fearing that other Israelites would

follow, they called out scornfully, "Look at the Hebrews, they are crawling out of their hiding-places; come higher up, we wish to become better acquainted with you."* It had been previously agreed between Jonathan and his sword-bearer that should they receive such a challenge they would press on and bravely commence the attack. The Philistines who first beheld the daring climbers, soon left off scoffing, for twenty men were killed at the first attack with pieces of rock and sling-stones. The Benjamites were very skilful in the use of the sling, and Jonathan and his sword-bearer advanced further and continued hurling masses of rock at the Philistines. Terror-stricken by this sudden attack from a side where approach had seemed impossible, they could only imagine themselves attacked by supernatural beings, and seized with fear, they fought each other or broke the ranks in the wildest confusion. Saul, who was watching from a high eminence, no sooner perceived the enemy beginning to fly than he hurried to the scene of action followed by his six hundred warriors, and completed the defeat of the Philistines. Those Israelites who had until then been compelled by the Philistines to fight against their own brethren, turned their arms against their oppressors. Others who had hidden themselves in the clefts and grottoes of the mountains of Ephraim took courage when they witnessed the flight of the Philistines, and swelled the ranks of the aggressors. Saul's troops, thus increased, numbered ten thousand. In every town of Mount Ephraim, through which the Philistines passed in their flight, they were attacked by the inhabitants and cut down one by one. Though tired and exhausted, Saul's troops pursued the retreating foe for eight hours.

An occurrence of apparently slight consequence, but which proved to be of great importance, put a

* I Samuel xiv. 12.

stop to further pursuit. Saul had impressed on his soldiers that the destruction of their enemy was not to be interrupted even for food or refreshment, and he pronounced a curse on him who should take the slightest nourishment. Jonathan, who was always foremost, had heard nothing of this curse. Exhausted from the long fight and pursuit he could not restrain himself, and tasted wild honey into which he had dipped his staff. When his attention was drawn to his father's peremptory command, he openly avowed his act. Saul, however, made a serious matter of it, and determined to condemn Jonathan to death. But the people protested vehemently. "What!" cried the warriors, "shall Jonathan to whom the people owes its great victory be killed? No, not a hair of his head shall be touched."* The people offered a sin-offering for Jonathan, and thus released him from death. Through this episode the pursuit of the Philistines to the west of Aijalon was suspended. Great was the joy of the Israelites at the victory they had so unexpectedly obtained. The battle of Michmash fully restored their valour. They had regained their weapons, and they felt strong enough to fight under a king whose firmness of resolve they had experienced. But Saul returned humbly and modestly to his dwelling place in Gibeah, and ploughed, as heretofore, his father's fields. He was not yet blinded by his new dignity. Meanwhile the hostilities of the Ammonites against the tribes on the other side of the Jordan had increased. Nahash, king of the Ammonites, besieged the fortress of Jabesh-Gilead. The inhabitants were unable to hold out for long, and negotiated with Nahash about a capitulation. He made a hard, inhuman condition with the Gileadites of Jabesh. As a disgrace to Israel, all men should consent to lose the right eye. What were the

* I Samuel xiv. 45.

Gileadites to do? They treated for a delay of seven days in order to send messages to their fellow-tribesmen. While Saul was one day returning home with his yoke of bullocks from the field, he met the inhabitants of Gibeah in great excitement and bathed in tears. Astonished at this, he asked the cause of their grief, and the messengers from Jabesh-Gilead related what would befall their town if speedy assistance were not at hand. Incensed at the disgraceful condition imposed by the king of the Ammonites, Saul immediately determined to bring aid to the Gileadites of Jabesh. For the first time he exercised his royal prerogative by summoning all Israel to take part in the campaign against the Ammonites.

Samuel supported this summons by declaring that he too would join in the expedition. By Saul's command all the warriors assembled at the meeting-place. The anarchy of the era of the Judges was now at an end, and a stern will ruled. A large body of Israelites crossed the Jordan; the Ammonites, attacked on the south, north, and west, fled in all directions, and no two of them remained together. The people of Jabesh were saved, and ever after displayed the deepest gratitude to Saul and his house for the help so quickly and energetically rendered to them. On his recrossing the Jordan, after his second victory over the enemy, Saul was greeted with tumultuous joy. Samuel, who was a witness to these expressions of delight, thought it wise to remind the king and his people that their triumph should not turn into pride, and that they should not consider the kingly dignity as an end, but only as a means. He therefore summoned a large gathering of the Israelites, and determined to call the king's and the people's attention to their duties. Samuel again anointed Saul as king; the people renewed their homage, and made joyful offerings.

In the midst of these rejoicings Samuel delivered an address, which bears testimony to the powers of his mind and to his greatness as a prophet.

Saul's two important victories, and the assemblage at Gilgal, where homage had been rendered to him by nearly all the tribes, consolidated his power, and the royal dominion was placed on a permanent basis. Although Samuel praised and extolled the days of the Judges, the people yet felt that it could better appreciate a king than a hero-judge. The nation willingly exchanged its republican liberty for the prize of unity and the power obtained thereby. The kingly estate led to various changes. Saul had to employ responsible men for the execution of his commands; he required a number of officers and servants. Officers of war were appointed to rule over hundreds and thousands respectively, and councillors, who were admitted to the king's table. A special band of men served as runners (*razim*), an armed force who became the obedient instruments of the king's will. These and their chief formed the king's court. Saul's leader of the guard was named Doag, an Idumæan by birth. Owing to the presence of the standing army and attendants, Gibeah, till then only a small town, now became the capital. Towards Samuel, Saul had at first shown all submission. When the prophet in the name of God commanded him to declare war to the death with the Amalekites, Saul immediately made preparations and summoned his warriors. The Amalekites were the implacable and hereditary enemies of the Israelites, and had displayed the greatest cruelty towards them during their wanderings in the desert, and on their entry into the Holy Land. These enemies often joined other nations, in order to crush the Israelites. The Amalekite king Agag appears to have caused great trouble to the tribe of Judah in the days of Saul.

It was however no light task to undertake

hostilities against the Amalekites. Agag was considered a great hero, and inspired all around him with fear; but although the Amalekites were renowned for their courage and power, Saul did not hesitate to prepare for this hazardous campaign. He appears to have carried on the strife with skill and courage, and to have drawn the enemy into an ambush, by which he was enabled to obtain a complete victory. He took the capital (possibly Kadesh), killed the men, women and children, and captured the dreaded king Agag. Only a few of the people who escaped with their lives, took refuge in the great neighbouring desert which leads to Egypt. The Israelite warriors carried off rich booty, including flocks of sheep, herds of cattle, and camels. According to Samuel's command, this spoil was to be destroyed, so that every trace of the memory of Amalek might be lost. The soldiers, however, did not wish this rich spoil to be given up to destruction. Saul, ordinarily so rigid in his discipline, permitted the preservation of the booty, and thus transgressed the prophet's directions. Saul was not a little proud of his victory over the dreaded Amalekites, and he caused the king Agag to be led in chains as a living sign of triumph. His success in battle intoxicated him, and caused him to forget his former humility. On his return he erected a monument of his victory in the oasis of Carmel. Meanwhile, Samuel in a prophetic vision had learned that the king had not fulfilled the instructions given him, and was therefore to be punished.

Samuel had to announce this to the victorious king; but the task was difficult, and he struggled and prayed a whole night. At last he determined to proceed to meet Saul. But hearing, on the way, that Saul was so dominated by pride as to cause a monument to be raised, he turned back and repaired to Gilgal. When Saul heard of this journey,

he followed him thither. The elders of Benjamin and the neighbouring tribes also proceeded to Gilgal to salute the victorious king. Here they were witnesses to a strife, which foreboded evil times.

As though nothing had occurred, the king met the prophet with these words, "I have fulfilled God's commands." On which Samuel sternly replied to him, "What is the meaning of the bleating of the sheep which I hear?" "It was the people," answered Saul, "who spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, in order to sacrifice them on the altar at Gilgal." * At these words the prophet Samuel could no longer repress his anger; and he replied in winged words: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifice, as in obeying His voice? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams. For the sin of witchcraft comes from rebellion, and the iniquity of Teraphim from stubbornness. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, He hath also rejected thee from being king." *

Saul was so deeply humiliated at these words and at the severe and gloomy tone which the prophet adopted, that he confessed his fault and clung to Samuel's robe so firmly that it was torn. Samuel then said, "This is an omen: God will tear thy kingly dignity from thee and will give it to a better man, even should Israel be torn asunder in the act." * Once more Saul entreated the prophet. "At least honour me now before the elders of my tribe and of Israel, and return with me." *

In consideration of this entreaty Samuel accompanied him to the altar, where the king humbled himself before God. Samuel then ordered that the fettered king Agag should be led forth. The Amalekite king exclaimed in his fear, "Oh how bitter, how bitter is death!" * To this exclamation Samuel

* I Samuel xv. 22 to 33. In the 32nd verse read *marr mar*
*romaveth.*

replied, "As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women," * and Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the king in Gilgal.

After this scene in Gilgal the king and the prophet avoided each other. The victory which Saul had obtained over Amalek had been a defeat for him —his pride had been crushed. The announcement that God had abandoned him threw a dark shadow over his soul. His gloom, which later on developed into madness, owed its rise to the threat which Samuel had used to him, "God will give the kingdom of Israel to a better man:"† These terrible words were ever ringing in Saul's ears. Just as he had at first hesitated to accept the reins of government, he was now unwilling to let them pass from his hands. At the same time he felt himself helpless. What could he do against the severity of the prophet? In order to divert himself he plunged into warfare. There were many enemies on the borders of Israel whom he wished to subdue. He also pursued another course in order to impress the people with a sense of his importance.

There still lived amongst the Israelites a few Canaanite families and small clans who had not been expelled when the country was conquered, and could not now be ejected. These had led the Israelites to honour false gods, and to indulge in idolatrous errors. Saul therefore thought that he would greatly benefit the nation and serve the law of Israel if he removed these idolatrous neighbours, and everything that was foreign. The strangers who had been suffered to remain, were the men of Gibeon, they having voluntarily submitted to the conquering Israelites. Saul did not respect the oath given to the Gibeonites, but ordered a wholesale massacre amongst them, from which but few escaped.

* See note on previous page. † I Samuel xv. 28.

Together with the foreign Canaanite nations he also persecuted the idolatrous magicians who were connected with them. Whilst Saul, on the one hand, endeavoured to acquire the good will of his people, and showed himself the severe champion of the laws given by God, he tried, on the other hand, to impress the nation with submissive dread of the kingly power. He wore a golden crown on his head, as a sign of greatness and exaltation above the masses. His contemporaries, who had known him as a ploughman, and might be inclined to treat him as their equal, were to forget his past, and become accustomed to gaze at him with awe as the anointed wearer of the holy crown. Saul also indulged in the royal luxury of polygamy. He took wives in addition to his first wife Achinoam, whom he had married when he was still a peasant. Among these was the beautiful and courageous Rizpah.

Saul showed much energy in his raids against the enemy, and no doubt, in order to dissipate the fears aroused by the prophet's harsh words, he displayed great pomp and ostentation, until then foreign to his nature. But sooner than he had anticipated, the evil spirit of his imagination took form in the shape of a youth that charmed him despite himself.

It happened at one of the frequent fights with the enemy that Saul's troops were drawn up in martial array against the Philistines, and the two armies stood face to face, only separated from each other by a deep ravine. Both were fearful of taking the first decisive step. At length the Philistines made the proposal that the battle should be settled by single combat, and they sent forth as their champion the gigantic warrior Goliath. King Saul would gladly have seen one of his army go forth to the duel, and he promised the victor rich presents, exemption from taxes, freedom from compulsory

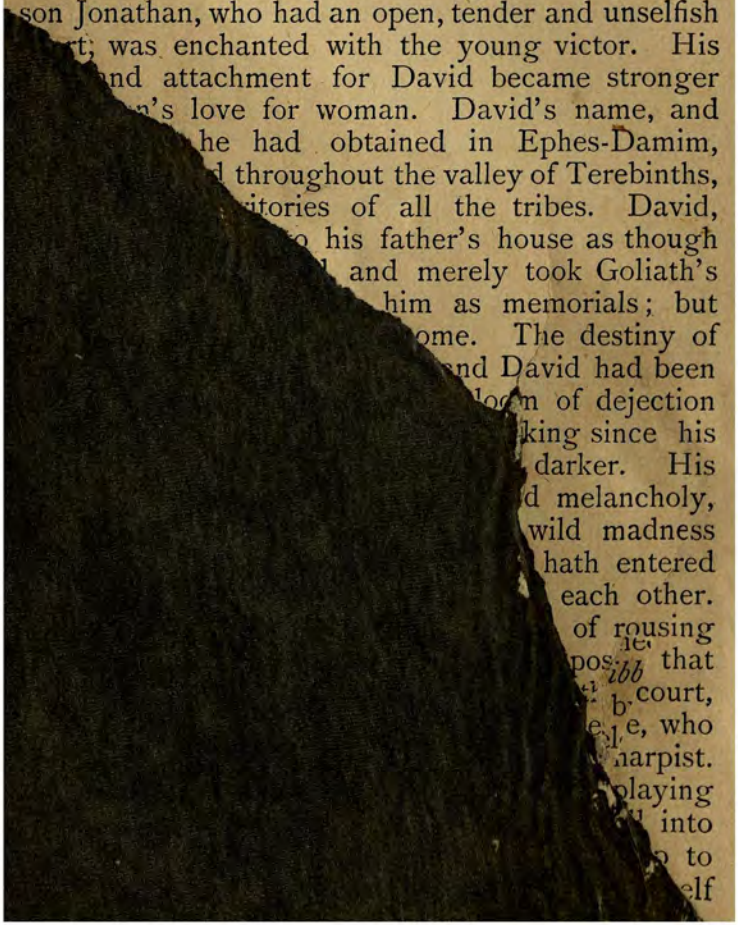
service, and the hand of one of his daughters. But not even at such a price did any one of the Israelite army dare to oppose himself to Goliath. Then, as if by chance, a shepherd boy of Bethlehem, a town near to the field of battle, presented himself, and brought about a decisive issue.

This shepherd of Bethlehem, directly or indirectly, was the cause of a revolution in the history of Israel, and in the history of the human race. David, then known only to the inhabitants of the village or the town of Bethlehem, has since become a celebrated name throughout the world. After his disagreement with Saul, Samuel had received the prophetic mission to repair to Bethlehem in order to anoint the future king of Israel from amongst the eight sons of the aged Jesse as successor to Saul. Samuel set out in secret, lest he should be pursued by the king. The prophet selected David as the future king chosen by God, and anointed him as king of Israel in the presence of his brothers. This simple but important act was naturally performed in privacy, and was kept secret by David's father and brothers.

Jesse, the father of David, was not descended from a distinguished house of Judah, but, like all the inhabitants of Bethlehem, he belonged to a very humble family. David was about eighteen years old when he was anointed, and was not distinguished either by his experience or by any deed. The beautiful pasture-land round about Bethlehem had till then composed his world. But qualities lay dormant in him which only needed to be aroused to place him as much intellectually above his contemporaries as Saul surpassed them physically. David was pre-eminently gifted with poetic and musical talent, and whilst he yet tended his flock his harp awakened the echoes of the mountains. A single circumstance, however, sufficed to change this youth into a man.

Samuel returned to Ramah as secretly as he had left; but he kept an eye on the youth whom he had anointed, and he now drew him into the circle of his disciples. Here David's poetic talents were developed. He was able to perfect himself in the use of musical instruments. He learnt still more among Samuel's surroundings; he learnt "to know God." His spirit became imbued with the presence of the Deity and received a pious unction. He referred all things to God, and submitted in all things to the Divine guidance. This reliance on God had been awakened and strengthened in him by [illegible] influence of Samuel. David frequently jour[illegible] from Bethlehem to Ramah, and from S[illegible] house to the flocks of his father. T[illegible] spirit to which he had attained since [illegible] anointed under the influence of Sam[illegible] him when he tended his flocks [illegible] Bethlehem. When war brok[illegible] tines, in the neighbourh[illegible] could no longer rem[illegible] and he gladly und[illegible] to his brother[illegible] so as to have [illegible] On his arrival [illegible] that he was w[illegible] blaspheming [illegible] living God. [illegible] ears that a [illegible] bat. Half [illegible] permission [illegible] his own [illegible] skilled h[illegible] giant fr[illegible] threw [illegible] the [illegible] Phil[illegible] of [illegible]

sought to prolong the war—in fact, they fled to their fastnesses. The troops of Israel, on the other hand, carried away by David's victory, followed their enemy in hot pursuit.

Holding the bleeding head in his hand, the youthful victor was led before Saul, to whom he had till then been unknown. He had not the remotest suspicion that this youth, from whom he could not withhold his admiration, might become a dreaded rival. He felt great joy at the signal victory. His son Jonathan, who had an open, tender and unselfish


like a son, and at length entreated David's father to leave him permanently at court. Saul appointed him armour-bearer, in order to have him always near and to be cheered by him. This was the first step of David's rise. But not only was the king attracted by him, David exercised an influence over the entire court, and all hearts turned towards him. Jonathan, however, loved him best of all. Saul's second daughter, Michal, was also secretly devoted to him. At the court David learnt the use of weapons, and exchanged the harp for the sword. As he was full of courage, he soon distinguished himself in the small frays in which he took part, and came off victorious and successful. On one occasion, when David had inflicted a signal defeat on the Philistines, and when there were great rejoicings throughout the Israelite territory, the women and maidens of the various cities which he traversed on his return, came forth to meet him with songs, timbrels and cymbals, dancing around him, and joyfully proclaiming him victor, saying, "Saul has killed his thousands, but David his tens of thousands." These honours, unanimously and enthusiastically offered to the youthful hero, at length opened Saul's eyes. This was "the better man," the one whom God had chosen as king over Israel; the rival with whom Samuel had threatened him, whom he dreaded so greatly, but who had hitherto only appeared to him as a visionary being, was now actually before him in the person of his own favourite and that of his people.

It was a terrible disillusion for Saul. "To me they give but thousands, and to him tens of thousands—they place him above me. What is yet wanting to make him king?" The joyous shouts of the singing and dancing chorus of women rang in his ears from that time, and brought to mind the words of the prophet, "Thou art deserted of God." Saul's love for David now changed to bitter hate, which soon turned to madness.

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On the day succeeding David's return from his triumphal procession, Saul became seized with frenzy, and twice hurled a spear at David, who skilfully avoided the thrust. When the mad fit had left Saul, the failure of this attempt seemed to him a proof that God was protecting his enemy. From that time he sought to destroy his rival by stratagem. He pretended to honour David; made him the leader of the picked detachment of a thousand men; ordered him to direct attacks of great importance and danger, and offered him his eldest daughter, Merab, for a wife. Saul hoped to bring the man whom he hated to ruin by these apparent marks of favour. David, however, avoided the danger by refusing to marry Merab, and, on the other hand, he had the good fortune to defeat the Philistines. He was to bring proofs of having killed one hundred Philistines, and he brought evidence of having slain double the number, and so Saul was obliged to keep his promise and to give him his daughter Michal. She and Jonathan sided with David in opposition to their father, thus incensing Saul still more, so that he sought to take David's life, at first secretly, and then openly, by leading his forces against him. David was proclaimed an outlaw, and became utterly desperate. He was now joined by youths and men as reckless as himself—men only anxious for strife. Chief amongst these was his kinsman, Joab, who, with his two brothers, formed the nucleus of the body of *heroic warriors* (*Gi[illegible]*) by whose assistance David was to rise step [illegible] to the throne. A prophet named Gad, be[illegible] to the school of Samuel, also joined him. The [illegible] representatives of the sacerdotal family of Eli, the high-priest, were driven by Saul into the very arms of his supposed enemy. Saul, fearing that the priests of Nob, the relations and descendants of Eli were aiding David, caused them to be cruelly

murdered, and the priestly city to be destroyed. One family, that of Abiathar, alone escaped death, and fled to David, who received the fugitives with open arms. Hatred of his rival made Saul cruel and bloodthirsty. All attempts on the part of Jonathan, who desired to mediate between his father and his friend, proved fruitless, and only served to widen the breach. Saul being clearly in the wrong, a part of the nation sided with David; but unable to assist him openly, they gave him secret help, by which he was enabled to escape from repeated persecutions. It is to be deplored that David, in his wanderings and privations, was obliged to form friendly relations with the enemies of his country—with the king of Moab; with the Ammonite king, Nahash; and with the king of the Philistines, Achish. He thus brought on himself the suspicion that he had become a traitor to his country, and that Saul's enmity to him was justified. David's union with Achish, by whom he had been at first refused protection, but with whom he had on the second occasion found refuge, seemed especially adapted to implicate him. Achish only granted him his protection on the conditions that he would break entirely with Saul and his country, that, in case of war, he and his troops, amounting to six hundred men, would join the Philistines against his own tribe, and that in times of peace he should make incursions on the remote portions of Judah, and deliver up a part of the booty to his liege lord. David certainly appears to have determined to avoid these conditions, or in case of war to join his own tribe against his allies. But he would then have to tread in crooked ways, and to give up the honesty of purpose which had hitherto distinguished him. It is probable that the wild appearance of David's troops did not make a very pleasant impression on the inhabitants of Philistia. The Philistine chiefs were displeased

that their sovereign should ally himself with a leader who owed his glory to victories over their own people. King Achish however, expected so much from this alliance that he paid no heed to the warning of his counsellors. But David himself felt the discomfort of living amongst the Philistine population. He therefore begged Achish to assign to him and his followers a dwelling-place in one of his citadels. This proposition being agreeable to the Philistine king, he gave David the town of Ziklag. No sooner had the news spread that a special city had been appointed for David's occupation, than warlike men, both strangers and natives, joined him, many of whom later on distinguished themselves by their heroism. Achish believed that in David he had secured a faithful ally, who employed his military knowledge and courage to injure the members of his own tribe, and who after such proceedings, could never again make peace with his own people.

In the delusion with which David had adroitly impressed him, Achish thought himself secure in undertaking a decisive war against the Israelites. Saul was sunk in melancholy, and since his quarrel with his son-in-law had lost his former energy for battle. The strong arm which had fought for him and the quick brain which had planned for him were now on the side of the enemy. The bravest youths and men in Israel had placed themselves under David's command. Achish summoned all his troops, in order to inflict a decisive blow on Israel. He led his army to the plain of Jezreel, crossed the plain, and passed along the coast of the Mediterranean. This territory had belonged to the Philistines since their victory over the Phœnicians, and it was, besides, easier to employ the cavalry and chariots there than in the mountains. In consequence of their treaty Achish demanded that David should aid him in this great war against Saul, and that

he should unite his troops with the Philistine army. David's heart must indeed have been heavy when he joined the army, but he had no choice; he had sold himself to the enemies of his nation. The Philistine nobles, however, delivered him from his equivocal position. They loudly and stormily demanded that the king should send away David and his soldiers, as they were suspicious of their fidelity. The Philistine king was forced by their almost rebellious demand to dismiss David; and, after giving him the assurance of his unshaken confidence in his fidelity, to send him back to Ziklag. This was fortunate for David, as he was thus relieved from the difficulty of becoming either a traitor to his own people, or of breaking faith with his ally Achish.

The Philistines meanwhile went forth in their thousands and encamped near to the town of Shunem. Saul, who had received news of the arming of the Philistines and their expedition, called together the Israelite troops, advanced in forced marches to meet them, and encamped at the foot of Mount Gilboa. He then surrounded the opposite heights and proceeded northwards with his troops and encamped at the north-west base of the mountain range near Endor. Saul lost heart at the sight of the great numbers of the Philistines, and especially when he beheld their cavalry; the evil days which he had brought on himself, deprived him of courage. He felt himself deserted by God, to whom he had addressed an inquiry as to the result of the war, for neither priest nor prophet could give him an answer. The spirit of dreams also had left him. He therefore sought a woman who practised ventriloquism in Endor, who had withdrawn to that place to escape persecution, and who exercised her witchcraft privately. It was a peculiar fate for Saul, that he was driven to have recourse to the arts of jugglery, which he had

banished from his dominions. With a heavy heart Saul went to battle, and as though his fears had infected his troops, the result proved disastrous. The Israelites, indeed, fought bravely, and the battle lasted the whole day, but they could not contend on the plain with the cavalry and war chariots, so they took refuge on Mount Gilboa. Here they were pursued and routed by the Philistines; Saul's three sons, the amiable Jonathan, Abinadab and Malchishua, all fell; Saul found himself suddenly alone, attended only by his armour-bearer, whilst the Philistine bowmen pressed on him. The king did not wish to flee nor to be taken prisoner and exposed to the scorn of the Philistines. He therefore entreated his servant to give him the death-blow. He, however, was unwilling to lay hands on the king, and so Saul had no alternative but to fall on his own sword, and die a death worthy of a king. The destruction was fearful, the flower of the Israelite troops lay strewn on Mount Gilboa and the plain of Jezreel.

After the Philistines had rested from their hard day's work, they explored the battle-field, and stripped the slain of their clothes and ornaments. Here they found the corpses of Saul and of his three sons. The king's head and his weapons they sent as trophies to Philistia, his skull they preserved in the temple of Dagon, and his weapons in a temple of Astarte to commemorate the great victory over Israel. They then forced their way into the towns on the plain of Jezreel, and into those in the north-eastern territory near the Jordan and fortified them. The inhabitants on hearing of the defeat at Gilboa had fled to the opposite side of the Jordan. The Philistines, as an insult to the Israelites, hung the headless bodies of Saul and his son Jonathan on the walls of Bethshan. It appears that the Philistines followed up their victory to the south of Mount Gilboa and Bethshan,

and occupied all the important towns. Saul's capital of Gibeah-Saul was so filled with terror at the approach of the Philistines that Jonathan's infant son (five years old) named Mephibosheth, who was being carried away by his nurse for safety, was dropped on the mountain by her, in her haste. The boy broke his leg in the fall and remained lame for life. Saul left his country in a deplorable position at his death, for things were worse than had even been the case at his accession. The defeat had been so thorough and unexpected, that at the moment there was no thought of opposition, all courage had vanished. It was even considered an act of daring that some men of Jabesh-Gilead (from the opposite side of the Jordan), out of gratitude to Saul who had brought aid to their town, ventured to avert disgrace from the king's body. They crossed the Jordan, at Bethshan by night, took Saul's and Jonathan's bodies from the walls, buried them under a terebinth and mourned for them during seven days. The tribes on the near side of the Jordan had not the same courage or felt no gratitude to Saul who had brought misery on the land by his estrangement from David. Such was the end of a king whose choice the nation had hailed with so much hope and joy.

## CHAPTER VII.

### DAVID AND ISHBOSHETH.

Burning of Ziklag—Defeat of the Amalekites—Judah elects David as King—Abner and Ishbosheth—War between the houses of Saul and David—Murder of Abner—Death of Ishbosheth—David recognised as sole King—Capture of Zion—Fortification of Jerusalem—War with the Philistines—Victory of David—The Heroes—Alliance with Hiram—Removal of the Ark of the Sanctuary to Jerusalem—The High-Priests—Choral Services of the Temple—Internal Government of Israel—The Gibeonites and Rizpah—Mephibosheth.

1055—1035 B.C.

DAVID, from whom formerly so much had been hoped, also seemed to have been forgotten by the people. What had he done while his fatherland was bleeding? Whether his expedition with the Philistines was known or not, it must have appeared strange to all that at this sad crisis he kept himself aloof from every danger, only caring for his own safety, and that far from hastening to the aid of his oppressed people, he remained firm to his treaty with the Philistines. It is true, he was himself at that time in distress, but the incidents which concerned him became known only later on. For the moment it must have been mortifying to those who cared for the common-weal of the kingdom that David was allied with the enemy, and that, during the absence of king Achish, in the war against Israel David seemed to a certain extent to guard the enemy's frontiers. When David was sent back from his intended expedition with the Philistines on account of the suspicions of the nobles, he found that his town of Ziklag had been burnt down, and the women and children and all those who joined him had disappeared. The Amalekites, who had suffered

under David's attacks, had made use of his absence in order to undertake a raid against him. The grief of the troops was so great when they found that their belongings had disappeared and their town had been destroyed, that they turned on David in their anger, and threatened him with death. However they took fresh courage from the oracular words of Abiathar the priest, and permitted themselves to be appeased. Hurriedly, David and his men then followed in pursuit. They discovered the camp of the Amalekites from an Egyptian slave whom they found ill and deserted by the way-side. They pursued the Amalekites, and David's angry soldiers routed them so completely that most of them were left dead on the field of battle, and only a few could escape on camels. David and his troops returned to Ziklag buoyed up by victory. They commenced to rebuild their town and to settle down. Part of the booty taken from the Amalekites, David sent as gifts to the elders of the people and to his friends in the various towns from Beersheba to Hebron so as to spread the news of his victory and at the same time to gain partisans for himself. Hardly had he regained a firm footing in Ziklag, than he heard the evil tidings of the defeat and death of Saul.

The chief men of the tribe of Judah, advised by those friends whose interest he had won by his affability, chose David as king. He then entered into communication with the tribes at the other side of the Jordan, in order to win them also to his side. To the tribes on the near side of the river he could not appeal, as they were still under the yoke of the Philistines. He expressed his contentment and his thanks to the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead for having shown their fidelity towards Saul even in his death, and for having rescued the corpse of the king from ill-usage. He also informed them of the fact that the tribe of Judah had elected him as Saul's successor.

His unhappy fate however, still kept him in the hands of the Philistines, and his prudence was struggling with his patriotism. The latter incited him to risk everything, in order to release himself from the fetters which bound him, whilst the former, on the other hand, urged him not to arouse the anger of his powerful neighbour. Achish gave David full permission to consider himself king of Judah, and to make incursions on the border lands of the desert on condition that he received his share of the booty, but beyond this David was not permitted to advance a step. The deliverance of the land from the Philistines, which David, whose hands were bound, was unable to carry out, was effected by Abner, Saul's general. He had succeeded in escaping in the great defeat at Gilboa, and he did not lose courage, but saved what was possible in the ruin which befell the house of Saul. Attended by some fugitives he took refuge on the other side of the Jordan (beyond the reach of the Philistines), where many hearts were still faithful to Saul and his house. To this place Abner conducted the surviving son of Saul, Ishbosheth, and the remaining members of the helpless royal family, and he induced the tribes residing on that side of the river to acknowledge Ishbosheth as Saul's successor. When Abner had collected a powerful force from amongst the tribes and the Benjamites surrounding him, he commenced his contest with the Philistines. Abner was successful in ousting the Philistines from the neighbouring border towns, but it was only after a struggle of four or five years that he was enabled to free the whole country, (1055-1051), so arduous was the contest. The tribe of Benjamin was the most difficult to reconquer, as the Philistines could most easily occupy its territory with troops. Every tribe which Abner delivered was eager to pay homage to the son of Saul. Abner achieved great results, he not only fought for liberty but he induced tribes

who had shown themselves unruly under Saul's government to join the commonwealth. He was the actual founder of the kingdom of the ten tribes of Israel, and he firmly welded together the links which bound them. But, notwithstanding his victory and his exertions, the nation was suddenly divided into two kingdoms—that of Israel and that of Judah—and two kings ruled them. The tribe of Judah which the energy of Samuel and of Saul had drawn from its seclusion and reunited with the other tribes was thus again separated from the whole.

Abner's victories aroused no feelings of joy because they led to disunion. The historian's pen hurries over his deeds and touches but lightly on the hero's achievements. The nature of the position made an amalgamation of the houses of Judah and Israel impossible. Not only were the two kings, David and Ishbosheth, averse to the reunion of the several tribes (as in such case one of the two must resign his kingly dignity), but their adherents and especially their respective generals Joab and Abner displayed a great degree of mutual jealousy. The turning point in the scale was that the house of Judah was led by a brave and martial king, who had been consecrated by Samuel and whose person was therefore considered holy, whilst Ishbosheth, a king only in name, had not been confirmed in his dignity by the voice of God, and who appears also to have been of an unwarlike disposition. The whole power rested in the hands of his general Abner. Ishbosheth remained in some remote corner of his possessions, whilst David had his dwelling place in the midst of his tribe and could thus direct everything from his residence in Hebron.

After Abner had won or reconquered all the tribes with the exception of Judah, a civil war broke out between the houses of Israel and Judah, or more correctly speaking between the houses

of Saul and David. This war lasted two years (1051-1049), and raged very fiercely. At length Abner called upon Joab to put an end to the slaughter of the masses. He cried, "Must the sword slay for ever; dost thou not know that only misfortune can arise from this warfare? Why dost thou not command thy people to hold off from their brethren?" At length Joab also found it advisable to put aside his weapons and to proclaim an armistice. He and his people bore the corpse of Asahel to Bethelem, in order that it might be interred in the ancestral tomb, and thence they repaired to Hebron. Abner and his followers crossed the Jordan and went to Mahanaim. But a tragical destiny was pending over the house of Saul. Abner had cast his glances in the direction of Rizpah, the beautiful slave of Saul, who dwelt in Mahanaim with her two sons. Although Ish-bosheth allowed his general many privileges, he yet could not permit him to entertain hopes of winning his father's widow, as this disclosed his intention of striving to obtain the throne. Abner feeling himself slighted by the rebuke he received, reproached this mockery of a king with his ingratitude, and turning away from him, made a secret agreement with David, by which he intended to secure him the homage of all the tribes. In return for this service he probably stipulated that he should retain his office of commander-in-chief of the Israelite tribes. David gladly entertained his proposition, but as a security of this treaty, he demanded that his favourite wife Michal, who had been torn from him by Saul and married to a Benjamite, should be restored to him. Ishbosheth himself no doubt saw the justice of this condition, and did not perceive in it any evil intention towards himself. On this, Abner, leaving the king, under the pretext of obtaining Michal's separation from her husband, entered the Benjamite territory; compelled Phaltiel

(Michal's husband), to give up his wife, whom he followed with many tears, till Abner's angry threats compelled him to turn back in sorrow, and David recovered the beloved wife of his youth. Abner then wandered about amongst the tribes trying to obtain secret adherents for David. Many Israelites no doubt privately wished that the luckless civil war might cease, with the subjection of the king of Judah; even some of the Benjamites were not averse to a union. Attended by twenty trusty followers whom he had secured for David, Abner secretly entered Hebron; David had succeeded in sending away Joab and his brothers (the distrustful and jealous sons of Zeruiah) on a predatory expedition. During their absence, David personally arranged with Abner and his twenty followers as to the manner in which the elders of the tribes should be won over to his side, and how the dethronement of Ishbosheth should then be carried into effect. Abner had already left Hebron in order to call upon the elders of the tribes to follow his example and do homage to the king of Judah. When Joab and his people returned from their expedition, they heard the astonishing intelligence that Abner, the enemy of David's house, had been received and permitted to depart in full favour, while Joab found that the king had made a secret treaty behind his back. As it seemed to him inevitable that he must be the victim of such a compact, he quickly decided on his course, and sent messengers after Abner, who returned. Joab and Abishai lay in wait for Abner at the gates of Hebron, and Abner not expecting them, or not having been warned against them, was felled to the earth by their swords. David felt the death of Abner acutely. The man who alone was able and willing to obtain for him the adhesion of all the tribes by peaceful measures was thus cut off on the eve of the realisation of his plan and foully murdered. David was

placed in an awkward position. In order to destroy any suspicion which might be felt, David gave full vent to his sincere grief at Abner's loss. He commanded a grand, imposing funeral in Hebron for Israel's fallen hero, ordered all his followers to attend the funeral-procession and accompanied it himself, and whilst in tearful grief he wrote an elegiac psalm of which the commencement has been preserved, which made a powerful impression on all hearers. All burst into tears and were convinced of the sincerity of his sorrow by the manner in which he recited his threnode of mourning. David, on the other hand, feared to demand an explanation from the sons of Zeruiah or to reproach them with their conduct; he could understand their motives. In the circle of his intimates alone he uttered bitter complaints of them; "Know that a great prince in Israel has fallen to-day."

The news of Abner's murder made a deep impression on Ishbosheth. He had no knowledge of his fallen general's treacherous league with David, and he therefore deeply mourned the death of a hero whom he supposed to be faithful, and whose loss seemed to be irreparable, for he considered Abner as the chief support of his throne.

After Ishbosheth's death the kingdom of the ten tribes naturally fell to David. He had also adherents of long standing, who remembered his warlike deeds against the Philistines in Saul's time, and who honoured him as the chosen one of God, through His prophet Samuel. Others had been won over to his side by Abner. Even those who took offence at David's league with the enemies of Israel, could not hide from themselves the consideration that no choice was left them except to do him homage. The Benjamites also acknowledged him, but with anger they could hardly conceal. David's inmost wish was now realised; from having been the ruler of a little insignificant

tribe he had become, after many obstacles and troubles, the king of all Israel. The breach between the houses of Judah and Israel was healed for the time being, and all seemed favourable to him. The priesthood and prophets did not, as with Saul, take up a hostile attitude towards him, but joined with heart and soul in his cause. A descendant of the house of Eli, named Abiathar, who had shared David's troubles, belonged to his court; and the other prophets copied the example of one who had been anointed by Samuel, and who belonged to that great man's circle of disciples. The prophet Gad also belonged to the court; and another prophet of the time named Nathan, was to a certain extent the keeper of David's conscience. By his priestly followers he was thus encouraged in all his undertakings, and in fact everything in the government of the interior conduced to level the way for him. But his foreign relations occasioned him great difficulties, which had to be overcome before he could rule as an independent king.

In the first place, David was bound to break with the Philistines if he wished to be free to win back the love of his people. He had to prepare himself for a fierce warfare with his former auxiliaries. But he did not immediately commence hostilities with them; they were too powerful for him. He wished first to free himself from other bonds. In the midst of the Benjamite territory was an enclosure, which had remained in the possession of the Jebusites, because the Israelites, on their entry into the land, had not conquered it. This high place, ZION, was rendered inaccessible on both sides by narrow valleys and artificial fortifications. The most impenetrable quarter was the south, where the rocky side of the hill rose almost in a straight line from an abyss below. From this mountain fortress the Jebusites ruled the entire sur-

rounding territory, and felt themselves secure from all intruders. They appear to have lived in a state of peace with the surrounding Benjamites and Judæans, as even Saul did not disturb them in the possession of their territory. David, however, considered it more to his interest to obtain possession of this citadel of Zion before commencing hostilities with the Philistines. He therefore resolved to storm the citadel and overcome its defenders. As soon as the Jebusites found all opposition useless they sued for peace, which was granted them by David. They were allowed to remain in their city, but not in the fortress; he permitted them to settle down in the east of the town, on Mount Moriah. This victory, which appeared so difficult, and was, in fact, so easy to obtain, had begun with the sneering remark about the blind and the lame, which gave rise to a proverb.

After the conquest of Mount Zion, David removed his capital from Hebron to that city, and it was henceforth known as the town of David. The whole city received a new name, Jerusalem (*Jerushalayim*), the meaning of which is not known, and it thus lost its old name of Jebus. Hither David removed with his warriors with their families, and his followers. The spot where the bravest soldiers had their dwellings was called after them the house of the brave (*Beth-ha-Gibborim*). Such was the beginning of the city which since then, and for centuries, has been known as the "holy." The choice of this spot as a capital was a fortunate chance, as circumstances soon showed. Certainly Shechem would have made a better metropolis, on account of its position in the midst of the tribes and the fruitful territory around it. But David found it impossible to move his dwelling to the town of the Ephraimites. The inhabitants were not especially well disposed towards him, and they were also jealous that the half-savage king, who

sprang from Judah, should prescribe laws to them. He required a secure retreat for his tribe, and this he could have in Jerusalem, which was situated on the boundaries of Benjamin and Judah, and which would serve as a protection against the incursions of the other tribes. The land on which the new capital was erected was not sterile, though it could bear no comparison with the part in which Shechem lay. In the valleys flowed everlasting springs, the springs of Siloah and En-Rogel in the south, of Gibeon in the west; so that in the dry season the town and fields were always supplied with water. On three sides Jerusalem is surrounded by a range of hills which protect and embellish it. On the east is a high watershed (2,724 feet), Mount Olivet, so named from the olive trees which cover it. In the south the hills are not so lofty, and the valley dividing them from the city is narrower. The valley is that of Henna (Ge-henna), which was thus named after an individual or a family, and which becoming but too celebrated later on, supplied another appellation for hell (*Gehenna*). On the west the summits are also low, and hardly to be called hills. On the north, the hills form into a gentle slope. By these hills and valleys, which form natural walls and ditches, Jerusalem is sheltered on three sides. Within Jerusalem, in the high plateau and between the three valleys, on the east, south, and west, there are three ranges of hills rising above the plain. On the west is Zion the loftiest summit. On the north is a hill of no great height; and opposite the third is Mount Moriah, which has an offshoot towards the south, called "Ophel." Moriah, though much less lofty than Zion, was destined to eclipse it and all the greatest heights on earth in importance.

The Philistines could not ignore the fact that the choice of David as king of the entire Israelite nation had not only greatly loosened the bond which united

him to them, but that it must in future force him to take up a hostile attitude towards themselves. They did not however wish to break with him. When the conquest of Jebus (Jerusalem) took place, they considered the fact of his removing his dwelling there as a premonitory sign. They hastened to give him battle before he should have time to arm the available troops of the various tribes. A Philistine band pressed forward across the plain into the mountains and approached Jerusalem. Whether David was surprised at their attack or whether he wished to keep the scene of action apart from his capital is unknown, but he left it with his troops and moved southwards to Adullam. Encouraged by this retreat, the Philistines pressed on to Bethlehem, David's birth-place, where they encamped and sent out predatory expeditions to plunder the land of Judah. David delayed attacking the Philistines, his army was probably too weak, and he expected reinforcements from the tribes. In order to stimulate his warriors to trials of strength during the pause before the decisive contest, David expressed the wish to drink out of a well in Bethlehem, which was in the possession of the Philistines. Three of the chief warriors, Jesheboam, Eleazar and Shammah, immediately set out against the Philistines, daringly drew water from the well and brought it to David at Adullam. David however, would not drink the water because his warriors had been obliged to risk their lives for it. He had only put them to the test. At length the Israelite troops went forth to meet the Philistines and utterly routed them at Mount Baal-Perazim. This victory was so decisive that it was compared with Joshua's at Gibeon. In their hurried flight, the Philistines left behind them their idols which were burnt by the Israelites. The enemy did not, however, relinquish their intention of subduing David and his people. They made repeated attacks, once in the valley

Rephaim, another time as far as Ephes-dammim in Terebinthea; David's troops and warriors performed miracles of bravery, they defeated their enemies and pursued them as far as Gaza. David did not content himself with mere defence, but he determined on attacking the Philistines. The only way to procure peace for his people was to make constant war with or to subdue the small but powerful nation which existed by incursions and warfare. He therefore proceeded with his soldiers as far as Gath, the former capital of the Philistines, which was situated nearest to the land of Judæa. The Philistines made a very obstinate resistance and violent conflicts arose, in which David's heroes had ample opportunity for distinguishing themselves. It appears that the Philistines suggested according to their custom that there should be duels with the remnant of their Rephaitic giants. Times had altered, however, and whilst in David's youth the Israelite troops had not possessed a single soldier who would accept Goliath's challenge, there were now more than thirty who burned with eagerness to take part in the duel. On this occasion the warriors entreated the king not to expose himself in battle, and in fact, not to go to war himself, in order that "the light of Israel" might not be extinguished.

At length the Israelites succeeded in utterly routing the Philistines so that they were obliged to surrender their capital Gath and its villages and surrounding territories to their enemies. The town at which the son of Jesse first appeared, entreating help in the guise of an imbecile, thus fell before him. One of the thirty warriors, Sibbechai of Hushah, killed the giant Sippai of Gath; another man from Bethlehem named Elhanan, killed the brother of Goliath, named Lahmi, who had sallied forth to the contest like Goliath laden with armour. David's nephew Jonathan killed a giant who had an extra finger on both his hands

and an extra toe on his feet. David himself was once, when exhausted from the long struggle, in imminent danger of being overcome by the giant Ishbi of Gath; Abishai, however, Joab's brother, hurried to his aid, defeated the giant and killed three hundred Philistines with his spear. The overthrow of the Philistines was a point of the greatest importance, it ensured lasting peace and freedom of action to the people. None of the other enemies of Israel were so greatly in its way. David did not push his victory further, he left the important cities of Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod and Ekron undisturbed, and even the town of Gath he appears later on to have restored to its king. No doubt he had reasons for not going to great extremes with the Philistines. It appeared to him better to rule them as a tributary power than to drive them to a war of desperation.

By his victory over the Philistines, David attained great importance and respect in the eyes of the neighbouring peoples. Hiram, the king who had extended his power from Zidon to Tyre, despatched ambassadors to David, offering to establish an alliance with him. He also offered to send supplies of cedar wood and building materials for adorning the new capital of Jerusalem in a fitting manner. He rejoiced at the subjection of the Philistines, probably because they would no longer be able to cast a wistful eye on the Phœnician coasts. It was a matter of great interest to the king of Tyre to secure an alliance with David in order that the Phœnician caravans and their goods might have free passage and protection when they passed backwards and forwards from Phœnicia to Egypt. David willingly accepted his advances, and thus a sort of friendship arose between him and Hiram. He accepted Hiram's offer in order to consolidate the capital which had been founded by him, and to obtain materials for adorning it with

architectural works. Hiram sent building materials and builders, so that Jerusalem might vie in outward appearance with the other capitals of those times. In the first place Jerusalem had to be fortified, especially on the north where it was most liable to be attacked. The hill of Zion, or City of David, was, in fact, not sufficiently extensive to contain all the inhabitants who had already settled there, and it had become necessary to take measures to provide for the increasing population. For this reason, they included in its boundaries the hill which lay to the north of the town. Between Zion and this hillock ran a narrow valley. The northern elevation of the town was called *Millô* (border), it was considered the newer quarter of the town, in comparison with the more ancient city of David. Mount Moriah and its offshoot Ophel remained outside the circuit of the city, and in those days was not considered as belonging to Jerusalem, but was inhabited by the surviving remnant of the Jebusites. David also had built a palace of cedar, the wood for which was procured from Lebanon. To Joab and the other important personages of David's court, were assigned roomy and well-built houses, which were not constructed of cedar wood, but of cypress.

David further sought to make Jerusalem the centrepoint of religious life, in order that the eyes of the whole nation might be turned towards it. He therefore took measures to remove the ark of the sanctuary from the house of Abinadab at Kirjath-Jearim, where it had remained since its recovery from the hands of the Philistines. A splendid tent was built for its reception in the city of David. David had vowed not to remain in his house, nor to rest on his bed, nor to close his eyes in sleep until he had found a resting-place for the ark of the covenant. Accompanied by a great concourse the king repaired to Kirjath-Jearim (which lay at about an hour's journey north-west

of Jerusalem), and many Levites followed in the king's train. The ark of the sanctuary was placed on a new carriage drawn by bullocks, and led by two sons of Abinadab. Choirs of Levites sang hymns and accompanied themselves with stringed instruments, and David also assisted them to the best of his power. An accident, however, occurred on the road, Uzzah, a priest who walked next to the chariot, suddenly fell down dead. David was so shocked at this catastrophe, that he hesitated to carry the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem. He feared that it might bring misfortune on the people, as it had done in the case of the Philistines. It was therefore placed in a house for three months, and, seeing that no evil came of it, David determined on making a second attempt at bringing it to Mount Zion. On this occasion, however, it was not placed on a chariot, but was carried by Levites. Followed by a mass of people, and amidst shouts of joy, blasts of trumpets, and dancing, the ark was conveyed to the tent appointed for it. The king himself, forgetful of his dignity, sang and danced in exultation before the ark. His conduct called forth a rebuke from his wife Michal, who scoffingly charged him with behaving like a public clown.

As it had done in the case of Shiloh, the arrival of the Sanctuary raised Jerusalem to the dignity of a holy city. It was necessary to have a priest or priesthood in a place dedicated to moral culture. Abiathar, David's faithful follower in all his wanderings, was, as a matter of course, raised to the office of High Priest to the sanctuary in Zion. There was, however, another high priest in Gibeon, whom Saul had placed there after the destruction of Eli's family in Nob. David could not entirely displace him, for such a course would have led to dissensions. He therefore confirmed his predeces-

sor's appointment, and thus retained two high priests in office at the same time—Abiathar in Jerusalem, and Zadok in Gibeon. The foster-child, as he was, of the Levitical choir, a poet and musician, David (following Samuel's precedent) acted as might have been expected, in introducing choral singing into the solemn religious services. He also composed hymns of praise for special occasions, such as in the event of a victory over the enemy, or when his heart was filled with thankfulness at some happy consummation, and was thus inspired with poetical fervour. He has served as a model for this heartfelt and inspiring style of verse. Besides the royal psalmist there were other contemporary poets and musicians, such as Asaph, Heman, a grandson of Samuel, and Jeduthun. Their descendants were the Asaphites and Korachites (Bene Korach), who are still named with David as the most famous composers of psalmic literature. David arranged that Asaph and his choir should lead the choral service at Jerusalem in the sanctuary, whilst his fellow-musicians Heman and Jeduthun, performed the same functions at the altar in Gibeon. Samuel's creation of a spiritual divine service was thus firmly established by David; and though he praised sacrificial rites, he also introduced psalms into part of the services, as being more adapted to elevate and purify the mind. At a time when poetry as an art, had hardly awakened amongst the other nations, it already occupied an important part in the divine services of Israel.

In the same way as David was the actual founder of a sanctifying divine worship, he was also the founder of a system of government which was based on the justice of the Creator. He presided at the tribunal, listened untiringly to the disputes of individuals or of tribes, and administered justice with strict impartiality. His throne was not only

the high seat of government and power, it was also that of order and justice. Succeeding generations pronounced David the ideal of kingship. His throne was looked upon as the prop of justice, and his sceptre as the guide by which to obtain inward peace. Jerusalem was raised by him to an ideal city, where a pure worship of God was observed, and justice, in its most exalted form, had found its resting place on earth. A later psalmist says—

> "Jerusalem, that art builded as a city that is compact together,
> Whither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord;
> For a testimony unto Israel,
> To give thanks unto the name of the Lord.
> For there are set thrones for judgment,
> The thrones of the house of David."
>
> PSALM cxxii. 3—5.

Jerusalem was considered a faithful citadel—full of righteousness—where justice had its dwelling-place. These circumstances, the deliverance from the yoke of the Philistines, the universal safety, and the establishment of justice under David's rule, rendered him the favourite of the people, as he had been in his youth. A feeling of attachment to him prevailed, and as it was of spontaneous growth, he had not to gain it by force.

David partly altered the internal arrangements of the country. The constitution of the tribes remained intact. The elders represented the families, and the head of the oldest family was also the prince of his tribe (Neszi-Beth-Ab). The princes were the representatives of the tribes before the king. The freedom of the tribes, or rather their free action, was limited in regard to the arrangements for battle. Each tribe, in case of war was bound to contribute a number of capable soldiers (over twenty years of age) as its complement to the national army (*Zaba*). A special officer was appointed over this contingent, who was called the enumerator (*Sopher*), or the leader of the list. He wrote down on a list the

names of the men fit for active service, their enrolment, and compelled the attendance of all defaulters. This duty David had delegated to a man named Shavsha, from whom it passed to his heir. As soon as the army was assembled it was commanded by the field officer (*Sar-ha-Zaba*) who at this conjuncture was Joab. David also supported a troop of mercenaries whom he engaged from the heathen soldiery, the Cherethites who came from a territory belonging to the Philistine dominions, and the Pelethites of whose origin we are uncertain. Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, one of the bravest of David's soldiers, was their commander. David also appointed a special officer on whom devolved the duty of reporting to the king all important or apparently important events. He was called the reporter (Maskhir). As favouritism is inseparable from kingly will, David also had a favourite (named Hushai Arkhi) on whom he could rely under all circumstances, especially in such cases as were not fit for the general public. He was also fortunate in having an adviser at hand, who could give suitable counsel in various emergencies; his name was Ahithophel, and his birthplace was the Judæan town of Gilo. At that time his advice was currently said to be as infallible as the oracles uttered by the lips of the high priest. This wise and overwise councillor of David was destined to exercise a great influence over his royal master in more advanced life. At one time David's judicial conscience was put to a severe test. A famine of long duration overspread the land on account of a two years' drought. Distress was at its highest pitch when at the commencement of the third year no rain had fallen, and the people turned to the king for help. This misfortune, in which the entire country shared, was interpreted as the God-sent retribution for some secret and unknown sin. David therefore inquired of the priest Abiathar for what sin expia-

the [illegible]eeded, and the answer came "on account [illegible]nd his ruthless persecution of the Gibeon- [illegible] David then sent to the remnant of the [illegible]nites and inquired of them what atonement [illegible] desired. Not satisfied with an expiatory sum of [illegible]oney, they demanded that seven descendants of Saul should be hanged in Gibeah-Saul. The demand of the Gibeonites seemed just, for according to the usages of the time the shedding of blood and the broken oath could only be washed out by blood. With a heavy heart David had to comply with the demand of the Gibeonities and satisfy the desire of the nation. The two sons of Saul's concubine, Rizpah, and his grandson the son of his daughter Merab were sought out, handed over to the Gibeonites, and killed by them in cold blood, in Gibeah-Saul, the town in which their father had won a crown.

David only spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, for he remembered the oath made to his friend, that he would always protect his descendants. The corpses of the seven victims were to remain on the gallows until rain should fall from the heavens, but it was long ere the rainfall. It was then that the beautiful Rizpah, for whose sake Abner had quarrelled with Ishbosheth, showed of what a mother's love is capable. In order to prevent her sons' corpses from being devoured by eagles and jackals, she made her couch on the rocks on which the bodies were exposed, and guarded them with a watchful eye through the heat of day. Nor in the night did she relax her vigilance, but continued her work of scaring away the beasts of prey from the dead. When at length the rain fell in the autumn, the seven bodies were taken down, and at David's command the last honours were bestowed on them. He also seized this opportunity to transport the remains of Saul and Jonathan from Jabesh-Gilead and to bury them, together with the remains

of their kindred, in the family grave of the House of Kish at Dela. It appears that on this occasion David caused his deeply touching lament for the death of Saul and of Jonathan, to be repeated in order to express publicly how nearly the destruction of the royal House of Benjamin had affected him. He directed that the elegy should be learnt by heart. Jonathan's surviving son, Mephibosheth (who had been living in the house of a much-respected man on the other side of the Jordan) was brought to Jerusalem, and David received him in his own house—placed him at his own table, and treated him as one of his own sons. David also bestowed on him Saul's lands in the tribe of Benjamin, and entrusted the management of them to one of Saul's slaves, named Ziba. Notwithstanding this, the Benjamites accused David of destroying the House of Saul, and of having only preserved Mephibosheth who was lame and unfit for rule. When David's fortunes were at their lowest the embittered Benjamites cast stones at him.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## DAVID.

War with Moabites—Insult offered by king of the Ammonites—War with Ammonites—Their Defeat—Battle of Helam—Attack of Hadadeser—Defeat of Aramæans—Acquisition of Damascus—War with the Idumæans—Conquest of the town of Rabbah—Defeat of Idumæans—Conquered races obliged to pay tribute—Bathsheba—Death of Uriah the Hittite—Parable of Nathan—Birth of Solomon (1033)—Misfortunes of David—Absalom—Wise Woman of Tekoah—Reconciliation of David and Absalom—Numbering of the Troops—Pestilence breaks out in Israel—Absalom's Rebellion—Murder of Amasa—Sheba's Insurrection—David and Nathan—Adonijah.

1035—1015.

When David had completed two decades of his reign, he became involved in several wars which withdrew him from the peaceful pursuits of regulating the internal affairs of the country and of attending to the administration of justice. These wars with distant nations were forced on him against his will, and gave him an immense accession of power and a surprising influence over the people. David first began a fierce warfare with the Moabites, who dwelt on the opposite side of the Dead Sea. With them he had been on friendly terms during his wanderings, and amongst them he had met with a hospitable reception. It is probable that the Moabites had ousted from their possession the Reubenites who lived near, and that David had hurried to their rescue. It must in any case have been a war of retribution, for after his victory David treated the prisoners with a severity which he had not displayed towards any of the other nations whom he conquered. The Moabite captives were fettered and cast side by side on the ground close together, then measured with a rope,

and every second division was killed, whilst one division was spared. The whole land of Moab was subdued and David imposed a yearly tribute, to be sent to Jerusalem. Some time afterwards, when Nahash king of the Ammonites died, David who had been on friendly terms with him, sent an embassy to his son Hanun, with messages of condolence. This attention only roused suspicion in Rabbah-Ammon, the capital of the Ammonites. The new king's counsellors impressed him with the idea that David had sent his ambassadors as spies to Rabbah, in order to discover their weakness, to conquer them, and to deliver them over to the same fate that had befallen the Moabites. Hanun was so carried away by his suspicions that he offered an insult to the king of Israel, which could not be passed over unnoticed. He obliged the ambassadors, whose persons, according to the laws of nations, were inviolable, to have their beards shaved off on one side and their garments cut off in the middle, and then hunted them out of the country. The ambassadors were ashamed to appear at Jerusalem in this guise, but they informed David of the occurrence. He immediately prepared himself for battle and the soldiers were called together; the troops of warriors girded their loins, and the Cherethite and Pelethite mercenaries sallied forth with their heroic leader Benaiah at their head. Hanun, who feared the war strength of the Israelites, looked around for help, and engaged some hireling Aramæans, who lived in the mountains of Hermon, as far away as the banks of the Euphrates. Hadadeser, king of Zobah on the Euphrates, contributed the greatest number—20,000 men. David did not personally conduct this war, but left the supreme command with the careful and reliable Joab. Having led the Israelite army across the Jordan, Joab divided it into two bodies. With the one he attacked the

Aramæans, the other he left under the command of his brother Abishai. He aroused the enthusiasm of his army with a few inspiring words: "Let us fight bravely—for our people and the city of our God; God will do what will seem good unto Him." Joab then dashed at the Aramæans and put them to flight. On this, the Ammonites were seized with such fear that they withdrew from the field and took shelter behind the walls of their capital. It was a most successful onslaught. Joab hurried to Jerusalem to report to the king, and to lay before him a plan by which the Aramæans might be totally annihilated, and any future interference on their part prevented. David placed himself at the head of the victorious army, which, after receiving reinforcements, had occupied itself with ravaging the Ammonite territories, and he pursued the Ammonites on the opposite side of the Jordan. King Hadadeser, on his part, also sent fresh troops to the aid of his defeated forces, but in a battle at Helam, the Aramæan army was again defeated, and its general, Shobach, fell in the encounter, and the vassals of the mighty Hadadeser then endeavoured to make peace with David. Tôi (or Tou) the king of Hamath, had been at war with Hadadeser, and he now sent his son Joram to David with presents congratulating him on the victory over their common foe. David followed up his successes until he reached the capital of king Hadadeser, situated on the banks of the Euphrates. The Aramæans were then defeated for the third time; their war chariots and soldiers could not withstand the attack of the Israelite army. The extensive district of Zobah, which had been tributary to various princes, was divided into several parts. The king of Damascus, an ally of the king of Zobah, was also defeated by David, and the ancient town of Damascus henceforth belonged to the king of Israel. David placed land-overseers in all the

Aramæan territories, from Hermon to the Euphrates, in order to enforce the payment of tribute by the inhabitants. David and his army must have been astonished at the wonderful result which they had achieved. It rendered the king and his army objects of fear both far and wide. Meanwhile the king of the Ammonites had escaped punishment for his insults to the ambassadors of Israel. In consequence of the campaign against the Aramæans, which lasted nearly a year, the Israelite army had been unable to carry on the war against Hanun. It was only after the great events narrated above that David's circumstances again enabled him to send his forces, under Joab, against Ammon. Yet another war arose out of the hostilities against this nation. The Idumæans, on the south of the Dead Sea, had also assisted the Ammonites by sending troops to their aid, and these had now to be humiliated. David deputed his second general, Abishai, Joab's brother, to direct the campaign against the Idumæans. Joab was meantime engaged in a long contest with the Ammonites, who had secured themselves behind the strong walls of their fortified capital, and were continually making raids on their foes. The Israelite army had no battering rams, nor instruments fit for conducting a siege. Their only alternative was to storm the heights of the city, and in their attempts to carry out this plan they were often repelled by the bowmen on the walls. At length Joab succeeded, after repeated attacks, in gaining possession of one part of the town—the city of waters; he reported this victory to David in all haste, and urged him to repair to the camp in order to lead in person the attack on the other quarters, so that the honour of the conquest might be entirely his own. When David arrived at Rabbah with fresh troops, he succeeded in subduing the whole town, and in obtaining a rich booty. David himself as-

sumed the golden diadem, richly adorned with precious stones, which had heretofore crowned the head of the Ammonite idol Malchom (Milchom). It appears that David did not destroy the city of Rabbah, as he had intended. He merely condemned the male inhabitants or the prisoners to labour, such as was done by slaves, to polish stones, thresh with iron flails, or hew wood with the axe, and to prepare tiles for roofs. He treated the other prisoners from the various towns in a similar manner. Hanun, the original cause of the war, who had so deeply insulted David, was either killed or driven out of the kingdom. In his stead David appointed his brother Shobi as king. Meanwhile Abishai had been engaged in a war against the Idumæan king, and had utterly routed him in the Valley of Salt—probably in the neighbourhood of the Rock-salt Mountains, on the Dead Sea. Eighteen thousand Idumæans are said to have fallen. The rest probably submitted; and for this reason David contented himself with placing excise officers and a garrison over them, as he had done in Damascus and the other Aramæan countries. The Idumæans however seem later on to have revolted against the Israelite garrison, as well as against the officers who collected the tribute, and to have massacred them. Joab therefore repaired to Idumæa, caused the murdered Israelites to be buried, and the Idumæan men and boys to be executed. He was occupied in this war of destruction during half a year, and so thoroughly was the task executed that only a few of the male sex could save themselves by flight. Amongst them was a son or grandson of the Idumæan king.

By these decisive victories in the west over the Philistines, in the south over the Idumæans, in the east (on the opposite side of the Jordan) over the Moabites and Ammonites, and in the north over the Aramæans, David had now raised the power

of Israel to an unexpected greatness. Though at the commencement of his reign when he was first acknowledged king of all Israel, the boundaries of the country had been comprised between Dan and Beersheba, he now ruled the wide-spread territory from the river of Egypt (Rhinokolura-El-Arish) as far as the Euphrates, or from Gaza to Thapsacus (on the Euphrates). The nations thus subdued were obliged to send yearly tokens of homage, to pay tribute and perhaps also to send slaves to assist in building and other heavy work.

These wars and victories displayed David's great mind in a better light than when he was weighed down by oppression. Strong and determined as he was in every undertaking in which the honour and safety of his people were involved, he remained modest and humble without a spark of presumption after success had been attained. He erected no monument to commemorate his victories as had been done by Saul, he rather resembled his general, Joab, who was imbued with the thought that to God alone was to be assigned the victory. The faith in God to which David had given utterance when he prepared himself for the duel with the Rephaite Goliath (1 Samuel xvii. 47), he preserved in all great contests. David worked out this guiding thought in a psalm which he probably chanted before the ark at the close of the war, and in which he gives a retrospect of his entire past life.

In consequence of their great victories two firm convictions were impressed on the minds of the people, and these actuated and possessed them in all times to come. The one idea occurs in various forms, "A king cannot escape by the multitude of his army, nor a warrior by his power; vain is the horse for safety." God alone decides the fate of war, brings it to a close, gives victory or defeat,

and to Him it is equally easy to conquer with few or with many. The other idea, in closest connection with it, is that "God always leads the armies of Israel if they go forth to glorify His name or to save His people, and that He leads them to victory." The God of Israel was, in accordance with this idea, designated by a special name which fully expresses this thought; He was named the *God of battles* (Adonai Zebaoth), the God who gave victory unto Israel in their conflicts. The King Zebaoth was invoked before every battle, and the Israelite troops went forth with the firm conviction that they could never be defeated. This confidence, certainly, worked wonders in the course of time.

Severely as David treated the idols of the nations whom he had conquered, he behaved with proportionate leniency to the conquered idolators. The Moabites alone were barbarously punished and the Ammonites were enslaved, but the other conquered races were merely obliged to pay tribute. The former must have sinned deeply and have deserved a heavy punishment. The foreign races who colonised the country were not molested, thus we find Jebusites in Jerusalem, and Canaanites and Hittites in other parts of the country. Thus also many natives and strangers who were not of Israelite descent enrolled themselves in his corps of warriors or led their own troops in his service. The Hittite Uriah one of David's thirty heroes, who was destined to be involved in David's fate, was deeply attached to the Israelite nation.

The joy at their great achievement remained, however, but for a short time untroubled. The happiness of a state, like that of individuals, is but seldom of long duration, and days of sunshine must be followed by intervals of darkness to prevent the enervation of the national vigour. By one false step David lost not only his own inward contentment and peace, but shook the

very foundations of that state which it had cost him such exertions to establish. When David had returned home from the Aramæan war, and was resting from the fatigues of battle which Joab and his army were still undergoing in the land of Ammon, he beheld from the roof of his palace a beautiful woman, who was bathing. She was the wife of one of his most faithful warriors (the Hittite, Uriah), and her name was Bathsheba. The houses of the warriors were built on Zion in the vicinity of the king's palace, and thus he came to see Bathsheba. Carried away by his passion he sent messengers to command her to repair to the palace, and Bathsheba obeyed. When David, some time after, found that this violation of the marriage tie had not been without consequences, his only thought was to save his honour, and thus involved himself in deeper sin. He commanded Uriah to return to Jerusalem from the camp at Rabbah. He received him in a friendly manner, and gave him permission to rest, and enjoy the company of his wife. Uriah, however, made no use of this permission, but remained with the guard, who slept in the entrance of the king's palace and protected his person. This conduct was displeasing to David. He therefore tried to find some safe quarrel, and this led him into the commission of sin. As he could not save his honour, he determined that Uriah should lose his life. David therefore sent him to the camp to Joab with a letter, saying that the bearer should be placed in a post of extreme danger—nay, of certain death—during one of the forays of the Ammonites. This command was fulfilled, and Uriah fell, struck dead by an Ammonite arrow. Bathsheba fulfilled the customary time of mourning for her husband, and was then received into the palace by David as his wife.

In every other State the court circle would have

discussed a king's fancy with bated breath; it would hardly have been blamed, and certainly it would have been soon forgotten. But in Israel there was an eye which could pierce this factitious darkness, and a conscience which declaimed in a loud voice against the crimes of even a royal wrong-doer. The prophetic body possessed this clear sight which never failed, and this conscience that never slept. Its first duty consisted in portraying and branding sin in the deepest colours, and not merely in screening and passing it over, and thus permitting it to become a matter of habit.

David no doubt believed that Bathsheba alone was cognisant of his sin, and Joab the only accessory to the plot against Uriah's life. But from this error he was suddenly roused, and the awakening was terrible. The prophet Nathan one day came to David and requested permission to bring a cause of complaint under his notice. He then related the following parable:—In a great city there lived a rich man, who possessed great numbers of flocks and herds; and near him lived a poor man who possessed but one little lamb which he had reared for himself. One day, when a guest came to the rich man, he was told to kill one of his flock for the meal, but he stole the lamb of the poor man to feast his friend. On hearing this complaint David's sense of justice was aroused and he said indignantly that the heartless rich man deserved to die, or at least to pay the poor man many times the value of the lamb. Then the prophet replied, "Thou art that rich man!"

Any other king would have punished the moralist who had dared to speak the truth to a crowned head, to the representative of God on earth, the pupil of the prophet Samuel. David when the picture of his misdeeds was thus placed before him penitently answered, "Yes, I have sinned."

He certainly did not fail to offer up heartfelt prayers and to make atonement in order to entreat God's forgiveness. The child which was born died immediately, although David had worn himself away in prayers and fasting, entreating that its life might be spared. Bathsheba afterwards had a second son named Jedidiah, or Solomon (1033), who became the favourite of his father.

But though God pardoned the king for his heinous sin, humanity could not forgive him; and this destroyed David's peace of mind. Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, was the daughter of Eliam (one of David's warriors), and the granddaughter of his counsellor Ahithophel. The father and grandfather felt their honour disgraced through their daughter's sin, and could never forgive David for his share in it. It is true they kept silence and did not betray their hatred. Ahithophel especially nursed his vengeance in silence and only awaited an opportunity to wreak it on the king. David did all in his power to appease them. He elevated Bathsheba to the rank of first queen, promised her secretly that her son should be his successor, and solemnly swore to fulfil this undertaking. He wished at any cost to make peace with Ahithophel whose advice he could not forego. Ahithophel, however, remained immoveable. Misfortune then befell the house of David which involved matters to a still greater extent, and robbed his remaining years of all tranquillity. His eldest son Amnon had seduced his half-sister Tamar, and thereby aroused the fierce anger of her brother Absalom who determined to avenge her. Each of the king's sons, of whom David had six born in Hebron and eleven in Jerusalem, when he attained manhood had his own house, household and lands. Absalom's lands and herds were situated at Baal-Hazor, not far from the capital. Thither he invited all the king's sons to the feast of sheep-shearing. Whilst they and

their guests were enjoying the feast and drinking freely, Absalom's servant at his master's command attacked Amnon and dealt him his death-blow. Absalom served a double purpose by this murder. He avenged the insult offered to his sister, and hoped to secure his own succession to the throne by ridding himself of his elder brother. The son of Abigail, the second in succession, was already dead, and so it seemed inevitable that he, as the third son, must succeed. That his son should be a fratricide was a terrible blow to the king, and one of too decided a nature for him to think it only the effect of a distrustful suspicion.

David's first impulse was to seek out the son who had murdered his brother, and taken refuge with his grandfather, King Talmai, of Geshur, on the south-west boundary of Judæa. Even by force of arms he would have punished him as he deserved. But there were various influences at work against him, as in fact, since the affair with Bathsheba, intrigues had been rife at David's court. Joab was opposed to the succession of the last-born, Solomon, and was naturally on the side of Absalom the eldest surviving son. Ahithophel, David's infallible counsellor, also favoured Absalom's claim to the throne, because he could use him as a tool against his father. On the other hand, Adonijah, David's fourth son, advocated the infliction of condign punishment on Absalom. Adonijah thought his prospects of displacing the infant Solomon fairer than his chance with Absalom, who was not restrained by any considerations whatsoever. If Absalom were punished for fratricide, Adonijah would be the next in succession. He and his mother Haggith might therefore have incensed David against Absalom, but Joab and Ahithophel were wiser, and exerted all the influence they possessed against the institution of warlike attempts upon him, or the grandfather whose protection he enjoyed.

When David had at length decided on seeking or demanding the surrender of his guilty son (though he had been absent for three years), Joab employed a ruse to turn the king from his resolve. He sent for a woman living in the adjacent town of Tekoah, who had a reputation for talking convincingly and aptly. With her he devised a plan, in accordance with which she should depict in glowing colours the fearful case of a father who would kill his own son, one too who had not quite unjustifiably murdered his brother. The wise woman of Tekoah consequently appeared before the king in mourning garments, and as though invoking his mercy she called out in an entreating voice and with deep prostrations, Help! O king, help! The king, however, discovered the hidden point of her story, and the allusion to his own case, and he demanded an open answer from her as to whether Joab had not assisted her in her disguise and invention. When the woman of Tekoah had confessed the truth, the king sent for Joab, and assured him that he no longer entertained evil intentions against Absalom, and assigned him the task of conducting his son to Jerusalem. The woman of Tekoah had, in her sensible and clear manner, put it to him that to take revenge on his own son, would be an inconsistency.

Joab himself brought Absalom from Geshur to Jerusalem, but the latter was not permitted to appear before his father, but was obliged to remain solitary in his own house. By this means Joab unconsciously sowed the seeds of dissension in the house of David. Night and day, Absalom, in his loneliness and disgrace, brooded over the vile plan of deposing his father. But he dissembled in order to render himself safer. To this end it was absolutely necessary that a reconciliation should be effected. Joab, who earnestly desired peace between father and son, became the mediator, for David decided that

having, during two years, exiled his son from his presence, he might now allow him to return. Absalom played to perfection the part of the penitent, obedient son at this meeting; David then gave him a fatherly embrace and the reconciliation was complete. It was seven years since the death of Amnon, when Absalom's intrigues commenced. He must have had frequent meetings with Ahithophel and have followed his advice. He obtained chariots and horses from Egypt, procured a guard of fifty men, and displayed regal grandeur. He arose betimes in the morning, listened to disputes and found everyone's case just; he used to regret that the king would not listen to all, and would not give justice to all, and he hinted that were he judge no one should have to complain of difficulty in obtaining his dues. Absalom pursued this course for four years after the reconciliation with his father. He was the handsomest man of his times, he was nearly thirty, and in the full pride of his strength. His beautiful thick hair fell in waves over his neck and shoulders like the mane of a lion. He won the hearts of all who approached him by his affability. David was so blinded that he did not see how his crafty son alienated the affections of the people from their sovereign, whilst Absalom merely awaited a favourable opportunity to proceed against his father, to dethrone him and rob him of all power. This opportunity soon offered itself.

It appears that David was occupied in the last decade of his reign with a comprehensive plan, namely, to undertake a great war which would require a numerous body of soldiers. He had already enlisted bands of mercenaries, six hundred Hittites, who with their general Ittai, (whose admiration for David secured his unswerving attachment,) arrived from Gath. The king also wished to ascertain the number of

capable men over twenty years of age amongst all the Israelite tribes, in order to assure himself whether he could undertake, with their aid a campaign which would probably prove severe and tedious. The king delegated the office of numbering the troops who could bear arms to his commander-in-chief Joab and the other generals. The process of numeration lasted nine months and twenty days. From the numbers which were handed in, supposing them correct, it appears that there were 1,300,000 men and youths capable of bearing arms amongst an entire population of 4,000,000.

This counting of the nation, however, proved to be a mistake for which David had to pay heavily. The people were highly incensed against him. In itself the act was displeasing to them, as they saw in it the prospect of enlistments for a war of long duration; added to this was the fear that the numeration itself must be attended by evil results, for such was the view held in those days. A fearful pestilence broke out, which carried off great numbers, and confirmed all minds in the impression that it had arisen in consequence of the numbering of the people. The capital naturally, being more densely populated, suffered the greatest loss from the pestilence. On seeing the numbers of corpses, or to speak in the metaphorical language of those days, at sight of "the angel of Destruction" which snatched away so many, David exclaimed:—"I have sinned and done wrong, but what has my poor flock done? Let thy hand strike me and the house of my fathers." The plague having spared Mount Moriah, where the Jebusites had settled, the prophet Gad bade the king re-erect an altar and offer up sacrifices on that mountain, and announced that the pestilence would then be averted from Jerusalem. Without hesitation David and his entire court repaired thither. When the chief of the Jebusites,

Ornah (Araunah), saw David approaching in the distance he hurried to meet him, saluted him humbly, and asked what was his desire. David then informed him that he wished to buy the mountain in order to build an altar on it. Ornah graciously offered him the spot and all appertaining to it as a gift, but David refused to accept it. No sooner was an altar hastily erected there and a sacrifice made than the pestilence ceased in Jerusalem. From that time Mount Moriah was considered a sacred spot, which destruction could not approach; it was also the mountain on which Abraham was supposed to have offered his son Isaac as a sacrifice.

In consequence of this plague the nation conceived a dislike to David; it condemned him for the loss of the thousands of human beings whom the Angel of Destruction had snatched away. Ahithophel made use of this dislike in order to avenge himself on David, and he employed Absalom as his tool, and, with him, contrived a conspiracy which could not fail to succeed.

Absalom secretly despatched messengers in every direction, in order to give those adherents who were already attached to him the necessary signal. The insurrection was to be set on foot in Hebron, an outpost of the tribe of Judah, where the elders had already declared for Absalom. The latter invented an explanation to deceive David as to the true purpose of his visit to Hebron, and the king permitted him to depart without suspicion.

Absalom arrived at Hebron, attended by his friends and guards, and by two hundred of the most important men of Jerusalem, whom he had invited under some pretext, and who did not suspect his real aims. These two hundred men contributed, by their very ignorance of matters, to the success of the project. The people of Hebron, seeing that important men had joined Absalom's party, gave up David's cause as lost. Ahithophel,

who had absented himself from court on some excuse, openly declared for Absalom, and gave his cause an immense accession of power, for he was known to be David's right hand.

The traitorous plan succeeded but too well. The Hebronites and others present saluted Absalom as king, forswore their allegiance to David, and sacrificed burnt offerings. Ambition prompted various members of David's family also to join Absalom. This was more especially the case with Amasa, his cousin, who considered himself a great commander, and wished to supplant Joab. The messengers then passed the signal previously agreed upon, and the conspirators who sided with Absalom gathered together, and shouted "Long live King Absalom!" They carried with them all who had been indignant with David for taking a census of the people, and in fact all who hoped to gain some advantage from changes and dissensions. The Benjamites, whom the loss of Saul had deprived of their right of precedence, and the ever-dissatisfied Ephraimites, were more particularly delighted at David's downfall, and willingly did homage to the usurper; they hoped to regain their former freedom through David's misfortunes. They had greater anticipations of obtaining power under Absalom (who was very vain, and not likely to retain the favour of the nation for long) than under the rule of David. The chief towns of all the tribes sent ambassadors to Hebron to salute the new king, and his adherents daily increased in numbers. At first the conspiracy was kept secret from those in authority; no one was permitted to journey to Jerusalem, for fear of spreading the news. David only heard of his own dethronement and the accession of his son by perceiving that the houses of Judah and Israel had renounced their allegiance to him.

It was a terrible blow for the king. But his

resolve was soon taken; he would not permit a civil war, as the sons of Zeruiah and many other faithful followers urged him to do. Deserted by all the tribes, he would have been obliged to shut himself up in his capital. The city would not be able to resist the siege of so large an army; and he saw, now that he was undeceived, Absalom would not scruple to make Jerusalem a sea of blood. David felt deeply wounded by the alliance of Ahithophel with his usurping son, and he was greatly discouraged by it. He saw, too late, that the conspiracy was of long standing, that the plan had been maturely considered, and that resistance on his part would only lead to his own destruction. He therefore announced to his people that he would depart from Jerusalem in all haste, before Absalom could leave Hebron with his numerous followers.

This step proved to David that he still had faithful friends who would be true to him till death. When, as he left his palace, on the road of the sellers of ointment, he observed to his great joy that a great concourse followed him. Not only his general, Joab, with his brother, Abishai, and their followers; not only a great number of the warrior-corps (Gibborim), the hired troops, Chereth-ites and Pelethites, with Benaiah their leader, but also Ittai the Hittite, with six hundred men whom David had only shortly before enlisted. The entire population wept aloud, whilst David with-drew to the Vale of Kedron, and passing in ad-vance of his generals, fled over the Mount of Olives to the desert near the Jordan. He did not venture to take refuge in a city for fear of treachery.

Later on the two high priests Zadok and Abiathar with all the Levites hurried after him, bearing the ark of the covenant with them. David however urged the priests to return to Zion with the ark,

saying in a gentle manner, "If by God's mercy I should be permitted to return to Jerusalem, then I shall again behold the ark of the covenant and the sanctuary; if not, if God deserts me, I am ready to endure what seemeth good unto Him." It also appeared to him that the priests could be of more service to him while they remained in Jerusalem than if they joined him in exile. Whilst, then, the priests hastily brought back the ark to Jerusalem, David ascended Mount Olives barefoot, with covered head, his cheeks bathed in tears, and his whole court weeping bitterly. But when his grief and despair had reached their climax, a friend from the highest pinnacle of the opposite side of Mount Olives came to meet him and bring him help. Hushai from the city of Erech was a confidant of David's, and a counsellor of no less wisdom than Ahithophel. He advanced, prepared to share the king's flight, in mourning array, with torn garments and earth on his head. David however refused to permit this; as an aged man he could only be a burden to him. In Absalom's vicinity he could do him greater service by counteracting Ahithophel's counsels and giving him hints as to his future proceedings. Hushai therefore returned to Jerusalem.

The first town which David traversed in his flight was the Benjamite city of Bahurim. Far from meeting with a friendly reception there, he was received with insult and neglect. A Benjamite named Shimei, of the house of Gera, reviled and cursed him, saying, "Thou outcast and man of wrath, God will repay thee for thy treatment of the house of Saul, whose crown thou hast stolen." He followed David's procession for a long distance, throwing stones and earth at him, so that the soldiers had to shield the king. David had, however, some friends in Bahurim too. Humbled and exhausted, the king at length passed through the

desert and reached the neighbourhood of Jericho with his forces.

Here he could recruit his energies after his recent bodily and mental exertions, while awaiting the news which his faithful adherents would transmit to him from Jerusalem.

When David had reached the banks of the Jordan, Absalom arrived in Jerusalem with his traitorous adherents, and with his evil counsellor Ahithophel to assist him. Ahithophel urged the usurper to commit greater crimes in order to widen the breach between him and his father, and to render a reconciliation impossible. He advised Absalom to take possession of his father's harem. It would matter little to Ahithophel that Absalom would incur the hatred of the people through this fresh misdeed. His sole object was to revenge himself on David, and to depose him. The weak-minded sinner who called himself king, and who was incapable of any unprompted undertaking, allowed himself to be induced to commit this crime. But, whilst Absalom was revelling in sinful acts, the man who was destined to undo all his ruthless deeds, was near at hand. Hushai had apparently submitted to the new king, and had assured him that he would serve him as faithfully as he had served his father, and Absalom relied on this promise. He called a council to consider the most expedient plan for defeating and ruining his father. The elders of the tribes, who were in the city, were invited to attend. Ahithophel gave the barbarous advice to attack David with a strong army on that same night. They could overcome him by a sudden attack and superiority of numbers, and capture and slay the king, whom they imagined to be utterly worn out and dispirited. Absalom also admitted Hushai into his counsels with regard to the campaign against his father, and he rejected Ahithophel's advice as impracticable. Hushai urged such plausible objec-

tions that Absalom was duped by them, and Hushai advised that they should not proceed against David with a small force, but that Absalom should raise from the entire nation—from Dan to Beersheba—an army whose numbers would render it irresistible. Hushai's advice was more favourably received than Ahithophel's, and steps were forthwith taken to act upon it. The attack was postponed, and the campaign was deferred till the numerous forces could be assembled. Hushai immediately conveyed the results of the meeting to David by means of Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the sons of the High Priest.

The first result of these events was favourable to the cause of David, for Ahithophel departed from Jerusalem and hanged himself in his native town of Gilo. He was led to this course either by disgust at Absalom's conduct in setting aside his counsel, or by the conviction that Absalom's cause would be lost through delay, and that he himself would reap a well-deserved punishment. This suicide was a severe blow to the usurper, for he had no capable man amongst his followers, and he himself was neither warlike nor prudent. His general Amasa had but little military genius. The enrolment of soldiers was actually begun, but before it could be completed David had obtained an important advantage. He went to Mahanaim, the inhabitants of which town received him with a welcome as cordial as that which in former times they had extended to the fugitive son of Saul. All the Israelites on the opposite side of the Jordan offered their assistance, and placed themselves under his command. Two men of Gilead outvied each other in attentions to the unhappy king and father, and provided him and his followers with all necessaries. They were old men—Barzillai from Rogelim, and Machir from Lo-debar—and help came also from Shobi, king of Ammon,

the son of Nahash. When at length Absalom or Amasa had succeeded in collecting a large force, they crossed the Jordan by means of rafts, and approached Mahanaim. The Absalomites encamped opposite the wood—according to no particular plan or order. David, on the other hand, divided his army into three divisions, commanded respectively by Joab, Abishai, Ittai, who were all three proved and competent soldiers. David himself was not permitted to accompany them, as his generals knew too well his love for his wicked son. The contest cost many human lives. Although Absalom's forces exceeded those of David in point of numbers, yet they were defeated, for they were not arrayed with any order, and they also could not well traverse the forest. David's troops fought like one man, but the forest was more destructive than the sword. Twenty thousand warriors were said to have fallen there. The forest of Rephaim was also the cause of Absalom's personal destruction. His long hair, of which he was very vain, was caught in the branches of an oak, whilst the mule he had been riding galloped away. It was a special providence that Joab should have given him his death-blow; the man by whom he had formerly been favoured, and who had, therefore, unconsciously assisted him in his conspiracy. Joab then sounded the horn as a signal to David's army to cease from the contest, and the adherents of Absalom took to flight, and crossed the Jordan.

Thus ended the second civil war of David's reign, a war which was the more unnatural owing to the close relationship between the rival combatants, and to the sad causes which led to the contest. The first duty of the victors was to transmit the news of their triumph to David. This was in itself a painful office, for all knew how deeply David would feel the death of his wicked son. David started at the

news, wept and sobbed, and cried repeatedly, "My son, my son, Absalom; would I had fallen instead of thee!" The depths of a father's heart are unsearchable. Perhaps, he considered Absalom more as a victim whom Ahithophel had inveigled and urged on to rebellion. The warriors dared not enter Mahanaim as victors, but they crept homewards as though humiliated after a defeat. David would see and speak to no one, but mourned continually for his son's loss. At length Joab took heart and reproached him in harsh terms for his ingratitude towards his soldiers by his continued mourning. In order to rouse the king, Joab further threatened that if he did not immediately show himself to his soldiers and address them kindly, his faithful followers would leave the same night, and that he would remain alone and helpless. These sharp words of the rough but faithful Joab induced David to rouse himself, and show himself to the people. The corpse of Absalom was thrown into a cave, and covered with a heap of stones. He left a beautiful daughter, but his three sons had been snatched away by death before his revolt, as though it were destined that no son of his should witness the attempt against his father's life. During his short reign at Jerusalem he had erected a splendid monument to his own memory in the "King's Valley." It was intended for his glorification, and it became the commemoration of his disgrace. After the close of the war David contemplated returning to Jerusalem. He did not wish, however, to force the tribes to submission, but rather to await their repentant return to him, and the renewal of their oaths of allegiance. It was a curious fact, that the tribes of the north were the first to take this course. The people seem to have appealed to the elders to lead them back to their king. They cried, "The king, who delivered us from our enemies and

freed us from the yoke of the Philistines, was obliged by Absalom to flee from his own country. Absalom is now dead. Why do you not hasten to bring back our king? Come, let us lead him home." On this the elders of the tribes invited David to return to his capital; and thus, for the second time, they acknowledged him as king. The tribe of Judah—and naturally the tribe of Benjamin—held back, contrary to all expectation. They did not move one step to welcome their king. Probably the men of Judah felt bitterly ashamed of the revolt they had excited in Hebron, and could not venture to entreat David's pardon. Perhaps, too, the discontent which had incited them to forswear their allegiance was still at work amongst them.

It seems that Amasa, who had fled to Jerusalem after the defeat in the forest of Gilead, still exercised a great influence over the men of Judah. When David saw that the tribe of Judah held aloof from him, he commanded the two priests, Zadok and Abiathar, who had remained in Jerusalem, to admonish the elders of Judah to invite their king to return. He told the priests to assure Amasa that he would receive a free pardon, and that he would retain his rank as general. With this prospect before him, Amasa determined to accept David's offers, and he persuaded the elders to accede to the king's proposal. The men of Judah thereupon sent an invitation to David, and an embassy went forth to meet the king and receive him at Gilgal. The men of Benjamin were sorely puzzled by this conduct. What should they do? The Benjamites had publicly shown themselves inimical to David when he had fled from Jerusalem through their territory; they had not thought it possible that he would ever return and reclaim possession of his throne. Now affairs had changed, and not only the northern tribes, but even Judah, prepared to do him homage. The

Benjamites felt no attachment to David, but they could not isolate themselves, for then the king's wrath would fall heavily on them. Shimei, whose insults had caused David such bitter pain during his flight, and who in consequence had most cause to fear the king's anger, advised that they should display intense enthusiasm, exceeding that of the other tribes, for David's cause, since by appealing to his generosity they might make him favourably inclined towards them. In obedience to this advice one thousand Benjamites went forward to meet David, joined the Judæan embassy and on arriving at the bank of the Jordan, threw a bridge across the river in order to facilitate the king's transit. Meanwhile the king had left Mahanaim and approached the Jordan, attended by his court, his servants, and the faithful followers whom he had attached on the opposite coast. Shimei advanced before all the others, threw himself at the king's feet as he was about to cross the river, acknowledged his fault and entreated David's forgiveness. David now returned with a larger concourse of followers than had accompanied him on his flight across the Jordan: he was attended by the Judæan embassy, by a thousand Benjamites, and by the faithful friends who formed his guard of honour. The nearest town reached after crossing the Jordan was Gilgal. Here the ambassadors of the various tribes from the opposite side of the river were assembled to renew their homage; they felt surprised and annoyed that the Judæans had stolen a march on them by meeting the king at the further side of the Jordan. They saw in this eager display of fealty, which they could not consider sincere, an effort on the part of the house of Judah to regain the king's favour to the detriment of the house of Israel.

The elders of Israel made no secret of their displeasure and gave vent to it in David's pre-

sence; the Judæans, however, retaliated on them. This dispute ended in a violent quarrel, the Judæans making angry retorts, thus offending the northern tribes still more. Hence a bitter enmity arose between the contending parties; David appears to have inclined to the side of the Judæans. Sheba, a Benjamite of the family Bichri, seized his opportunity during the general confusion, sounded his trumpet and cried, "We have no portion in David and no share in the son of Jesse; let every Israelite return to his tent." Obeying this cry, the elders of the northern tribes withdrew and followed Sheba the Bichrite. The men of Judah alone remained faithful to David and accompanied him to Jerusalem. The joy of their return was mingled with annoyance: a fresh breach had arisen amongst them, a civil war was imminent. At this sad juncture David had recourse to a step which may be considered either very wise or very foolish. Joab had become obnoxious to him since the king knew that he had killed Absalom, and David did not wish him to fill the capacity of general any longer. Besides this, he desired to keep his word with Amasa and to appoint him to the office of commander-in-chief. David being now dependent on the tribe of Judah felt the necessity of retaining Amasa's good-will, as the latter's influence had immense weight with the Judæans. Without Joab's cognizance he commanded Amasa to summon the forces of the tribe of Judah within three days, and to proceed against the rebels. The time expired and Amasa did not return. David became uneasy; he thought Amasa might have deceived him and made common cause with the insurgents. It was necessary to be expeditious if he wished to prevent Sheba's followers from increasing in number, and also, in the meantime, from occupying a fortified citadel. David had no choice but to turn to the sons of Zeruiah, who in their unswerving fidelity had

remained true to him in spite of frequent slights, and whose skill in matters of war he had amply tested. David would not, however, give the supreme command to Joab, but entrusted it to his brother Abishai. He set out with the Cherethites and Pelethites, who formed the nucleus of the army which he hoped to collect on the way. Joab overlooked the insult which had been passed on him and joined the troops, or rather became their leader. He appears to have called on the people to assemble around him. Having arrived in Gibeon, where Amasa joined them, Joab killed him with one stroke of his sword, and the Judæans, whom Amasa had collected, followed the sons of Zeruiah. In all the towns fresh partisans and followers attached themselves to David's cause. Sheba found but few adherents, the northern tribes being unwilling to begin a civil war for the sake of a man who was but little known, and who was followed only by a small band of soldiers. He had thrown himself into the fortified town of Abel, and a part of his followers occupied the town of Dan, which lay at an hour's distance from the base of Mount Hermon, and not far from the source of the Jordan. Joab quickly ordered a trench to be dug round the town of Abel, and without calling on the inhabitants to surrender, undermined the walls so that they might fall. The inhabitants became greatly alarmed. Then a wise woman called from the wall to the sappers below to summon Joab. When he approached she addressed him reproachfully, "Thou shouldst have asked first, that thou mightest have heard, whether in Abel and Dan all those who were faithful and peace-loving had departed from Israel. Why wilt thou slaughter the mothers and children of Israel? Why wilt thou destroy the inheritance of Jacob?" Joab replied that he did not wish to do this, that he merely desired to capture the man who had lifted his hand against the king. On this the woman promised

him to throw the head of the rebel over the wall. She kept her word, for she secretly persuaded her fellow citizens to separate Sheba from his few followers and to kill him. His gory head was cast over the wall, and Joab raised the siege, dismissed his soldiers and returned to Jerusalem with the news of his victory; and the king was obliged unwillingly to leave him in command of the army.

David returned with a purified mind to his capital. He had suffered, and atoned heavily for his sins. He had taken away the wife of his faithful servant, and his son had taken away *his* wives. He had spilt Uriah's blood, and the streams of blood shed in his own house had almost overwhelmed him. He had found by bitter experience how even the best king could not build on his people's love. His plan of undertaking a comprehensive war against his heathen foes had been shattered. He therefore confined himself in his old age, during the last years of his reign, to develop the inner life of his kingdom. He wished to carry out an idea he had long cherished, and to realise it before his death. He wished to build a magnificent temple to the God of Israel, who had rescued him in his many troubles. Before commencing, David consulted Nathan, the prophet; for in those days the prophet ranked higher than the priest. He said, "I live in a palace of cedar wood, whilst the sanctuary of God is only in a temporary tent. I will build a temple of cedar for it!" Nathan approved the plan and said, "Carry out all that is in thy heart, for God is with thee!" The next day, however, the prophet came to him and discovered to David that he was not destined to build a temple, because he had spilt blood, but that this task would be reserved for his son. At the same time David was informed that his throne would be established for many years to come—that a long succession of kings would descend from him and occupy his throne, provided

that they walked in the ways of God. Much as David had wished that he might build a stately temple in Jerusalem, he bowed humbly to the divine decree revealed to him by Nathan, and gave up his project. Before the ark of the covenant, he thanked God in a heartfelt prayer for the mercy bestowed on him, for having raised him up from his past degradation, and his heart was filled with gratitude that his royal house and his throne was to be established for many years to come. David gave expression to this feeling in a psalm, but it had not the same *verve* as his former song; it was, perhaps, his last poetic prayer.

Although David did not commence the erection of the temple himself, he began to make the necessary preparations. He devoted to the sanctuary a part of the booty which he had acquired from the conquered nations. He also regulated the order in which divine services were to be performed, according to Samuel's method, of having choirs of Levites to play on the harp and to sing psalms in addition to the ordinary sacrificial rites. He is also considered the inventor of the various musical instruments which were later on introduced into the service. Meanwhile David's vital energy began to decrease before he had attained his seventy-first year. The anxieties of his youth, the constant warfare, the exciting events in his own family, Amnon's sinfulness and Absalom's revolt, caused him to grow old at a comparatively early age. He felt no warmth in his body; he remained cold amidst the torrid heat of Jerusalem, and all the clothes which he could procure did not seem to supply him with the necessary vital heat.

Adonijah, the king's fourth son, endeavoured to benefit by David's failing powers in order to secure the succession. He was the next heir after the death of Amnon and Absalom, but he feared that he might be passed over if he awaited

the death of his father, and he had probably heard of the secret understanding by which the son of Bathsheba, his youngest brother, was to succeed. Adonijah had no desire to revolt against his father as Absalom had done, but he wished to make his right to succeed a recognised fact, and chiefly with the dignitaries of the kingdom. He therefore took counsel with those of David's court who were opposed to Solomon's succession. First amongst these was Joab, who supported him as he had formerly supported Absalom. Adonijah's other confidant was Abiathar, the second of the high priests, who seems to have been placed in an inferior position by David. Zadok, whose family had been appointed hereditary high priests by Saul at Gibeon, had been retained in that position by David, who wished to secure his support, and therefore bestowed upon him the highest rank in the sanctuary. Abiathar may have felt hurt at the indignity put upon him, and perhaps took the part of Adonijah so as to secure the position he could not hope to obtain under Solomon. The other sons of the king also wished to see the throne secured to Adonijah, and thus intrigues at the court commenced afresh. Adonijah was as handsome and as popular as Absalom had been, and also, as it appears, as thoughtless and unfit for governing. Like Absalom he began to draw the eyes of the masses towards himself by a truly royal display; he procured chariots and attendants on horseback, and kept a guard of fifty runners, who preceded him wherever he went. David was weak in his behaviour to him, as he had been to Absalom—permitted him to take his own way, and thus tacitly acknowledged him as successor. One day Adonijah invited to a meeting his confidants, Joab, Abiathar, and all the king's sons excepting Solomon. They offered up sacrifices near a well, and during the feast his followers cried, "Long live King Adonijah!"

The first to take exception to Adonijah's proceedings was Nathan the prophet. He knew of the secret promise given by David to his wife Bathsheba that Solomon should inherit the crown. He had also revealed to David that Solomon would be his successor. He seems to have had confidence in Solomon's character, and to have expected better things from him than from Adonijah. Nathan therefore went to Bathsheba and imparted a plan by which Adonijah's scheme might be overthrown. Bathsheba then repaired to the king, reminded him of his oath, and directed his attention to the fact that in the event of Adonijah's succession she and her son would both be sacrificed, and her marriage would be considered as a disgraceful one.

Hardly had she ended the description of the sad fate which awaited her if Solomon's claims were set aside, than the prophet Nathan was announced, and confirmed her assertions. David's resolve was quickly taken and carried into effect on the same day, for he was most anxious to keep his oath to leave the sceptre to Solomon. He called upon the dignitaries who had not conspired with Adonijah, on Zadok, Benaiah and the warriors, and announced to them his resolve that Solomon should be anointed king during his own lifetime, and they all solemnly promised to acknowledge Solomon. On this, David summoned the Cherethites and Pelethites to attend his son. Solomon then mounted one of the royal mules and proceeded to the valley of Gibeon. To the west of the town a mass of people joined the procession, and when the high priest Zadok and the prophet Nathan had anointed him from the oil which was kept in the tent of the sanctuary, the soldiers blew their trumpets and all the people cried, "Long live King Solomon!"

Great excitement now prevailed in Jerusalem. While the eastern mountains echoed with the cry

of "Long live King Adonijah!" the western chain was resounding with shouts of "Long live King Solomon!" Had both the king's sons and their adherents remained obstinate, a civil war must have ensued. But Adonijah was not like Absalom—he did not wish to excite a rebellion. His chief supporters, Joab and Abiathar, would not have assisted him in such an attempt. No sooner had Adonijah heard that Solomon had been anointed king by his father's command than his courage failed him. He hastened to the sanctuary at Zion in order to seek a refuge in the holy of holies. Solomon, however, who had immediately taken the reins of government, sent to inform him that he might leave the sanctuary, that not a hair of his head should be touched so long as he did not attempt any fresh revolt. Adonijah then repaired to the young king, paid him the due homage, and was dismissed with presents. Thus the quarrel as to the succession ended. David's weakness gradually increased, and after a stormy reign of forty years and six months (1015), he slept in peace. He was the first to occupy a place in the royal mausoleum which he had built in a rocky cave on the southern slope of Mount Zion.

David's death was deeply mourned. He had made the nation great, independent and happy, and in death he was exalted. When the soul had left his body, the nation began to realize the true value of his work and what he had been to them. He had reunited the various tribes, each of which had before followed its own special interests, and had formed them into one nation. The revolts of Absalom and Sheba proved sufficiently how strong the feeling had become which bound the tribes together. The house of Israel did not seize the opportunity offered by his death of severing itself from the house of Judah, and great as was their jealousy of each other, they yet held together. David had removed

every inducement for party divisions, and had knit them together with a kind but firm hand. During his reign the priesthood and prophets worked amicably together. Thus Solomon was anointed by the high priest Zadok in conjunction with the prophet Nathan. David maintained friendly relations between the priestly houses of Eleazar and Ithamar, who were represented by Zadok and Abiathar respectively. The nation could no longer complain of oppression, for he gave them justice whenever it was in his power to do so. In destroying the power of the Philistines, who had so long held in subjection the neighbouring tribes and the nations inhabiting the banks of the Euphrates, he had not only founded a great empire which could vie in power with Egypt, but he had cast into the shade the Chaldæan and Assyrian kingdoms on the Euphrates and Tigris. By this means he had roused the people to the proud consciousness that it constituted a mighty nation of the Lord, the possessor of the law of God, the superior of the neighbouring nations. David's error was gradually forgotten, for his atonement had been both grievous and manifold. Posterity pronounced a milder judgment on him than his contemporaries. The remembrance of his great deeds, his kindness, his obedience to God, invested him with the traits of an ideal king, who served as a pattern to all later rulers as one who had always walked in the ways of God and never departed therefrom. The kings of his house who succeeded him were measured by his standard, and were judged by the extent of their resemblance to him.

David's reign shone through all ages as the most perfect, and as one in which power and humility, fear of God and peace, were united. With every succeeding century David's reputation for sanctity seems to have increased, until he became the ideal of a virtuous and holy king.

## CHAPTER IX.

### SOLOMON.

The new King's Rule—Solomon's Choice—Poetic Allegory—Murder of Adonijah and Joab—The Court—Alliance with Egypt—Tyre—Solomon's Buildings—The Temple Plan—The Workmen—The Materials—Description of the Temple—The Ceremony of Consecration—Reorganisation of the Priesthood—The King's Palace—The Throne—Increase of National Wealth—The Fleet—The seeds of disunion—Jeroboam—Idolatry permitted—Estrangement from Egypt—Growth of surrounding Kingdoms—Solomon's fame—His death.

1015—977 B.C.

DAVID had left the state of affairs in such perfect order in Israel that his successor, unless he were a fool or a knave or the victim of evil advice, would have but little trouble to govern. Solomon, however, carried David's work still further. He raised the kingdom of Israel to a yet higher pitch, so that the most distant generations could revel in the beams of light shed on them through his wise rule. It is certain that a king who solidifies and increases, if he does not actually found the greatness of the State, who permits his people the enjoyment of peace, who sheds the bounties of plenty over his land, driving poverty away from the meanest hovel, who opens out new directions for the development of his people's powers, and who thus increases and strengthens them; the king who also has the intelligence to arouse them to exercise their mental gifts and their love of the beautiful, who by his worldly and spiritual labours elevates his country to the dignity of a model State such as had never been before him and scarcely ever after him—such a monarch must assuredly deserve the highest praise that posterity can accord to him. Carried away

by the greatness of his deeds—for all these grand characteristics were strikingly prominent in Solomon—men shut their eyes to his weaknesses, and considered them the inevitable result of human imperfection. In the first place he strove to preserve peace for his country, though his father had left him ample means for making fresh conquests. He was called the king of peace—"Shelomo." He established the prosperity and comfort of his people, and raised them from a condition of oppression and narrow-minded servility. He ruled them with wisdom and justice, and decided with strict impartiality all quarrels which divided individuals and tribes. He increased the number of the towns, and secured the safety of the roads and of the caravans. He filled the City of Jerusalem with splendour and built therein a magnificent temple in honour of God. He himself cultivated the fine arts and poetry, and thereby endowed them with fresh attractions in the eyes of the people. Lastly, he set great aims before the nation, and was rightly called the wise king.

Justice, the impartial arbitress, cannot, however, be blinded by his dazzling virtues to the blemishes which attach to his government, as a result of which must be accounted the unfortunate breach which commenced when his grave was scarcely closed. The beginning of Solomon's rule was not free from the stain of blood, and its end was clouded with mists which dimmed its brightness; his love of splendour became injurious to morality; it made him despotic, and imposed a burden on the people which they endured for a considerable time, but shook off at the first favourable opportunity. Solomon converted the kingly power into an autocracy under which every will had to be subservient to his. But these blemishes were entirely hidden by the greatness of the creations under his rule. It is also difficult to decide in how far Solomon was

personally responsible for these matters, or in how far the blame rested with his too active servants, or with that dire necessity, which draws both high and low into its restless whirlpool with overpowering velocity. It is the curse of crowned heads that the worthiest wearer of a crown is induced to take steps in order to consolidate his power, which his conscience would under other circumstances condemn, while the misdeeds of his servants are also added to his account. Solomon was young—scarcely twenty—when he ascended the throne. Whilst he was at the altar at Gibeon, after his accession, he had a vision in which it appeared to him that God commanded him to express the innermost wish of his heart, with the promise that it should be fulfilled. He did not choose a long life, nor riches, nor honour, nor the death of his enemies; but he chose wisdom, in order that he might rule his people with justice. This wisdom, this power of entering into the feelings and minds of the dissenting parties who appeared before him, of seizing on the true state of the case in spite of exaggeration and subtle arguments, Solomon possessed to an extraordinary degree. The judgment of Solomon is well known. In a verdict where the real feeling of a mother could reveal itself, he recognized in a dispute between two women for the possession of a child, on which side was truth, on which side falsehood. "Cut the child in half," he said. But its real mother could not accept this decision, and offered rather to give up her child. No one could complain of injustice in his kingdom. Though he may not have been the first who uttered the saying, "That through justice the throne should be established," yet it was a maxim after his own heart.

In another direction, the wisdom of Solomon has also been greatly extolled, namely in his poetic art. This chiefly consisted in allegorical poems (Mashal); in these he caused the lofty cedars of

Lebanon, and the lowly creeping wall plants, to speak as the highest and lowest emblems; in the same way he made use of quadrupeds, birds of the air, and reptiles.

Solomon was by no means the inventor of poetic fables, each of which ended with an appropriate moral. It has been related that Solomon composed three thousand such fables and five thousand songs or proverbs, and these compositions were for a long period common among the Israelites. Standing on Mount Gerizim, Jotham, the son of the Judge Gideon, addressed the misguided people of Shechem in an ingenious parable. The prophet Nathan had disguised his exhortation to David respecting his sin with Bathsheba in the form of a parable. But though Solomon was not the inventor of this style of poetry, he is still deserving of praise for devoting the time left unoccupied by the cares of government, to the further development of the art. Solomon's rare qualities of mind were displayed in yet another direction. In some compositions he spoke of persons and things in such a manner as merely to refer to them by means of signs, and thus to leave their identity a matter of guesswork. Such an enigma when presented in a poetic form made a pleasant amusement as a *jeu d'esprit* to pass the time whilst in camp or at the feast. Solomon possessed a remarkable taste for these things.

He was, however, guilty of errors, the greater part of which arose from his putting too much stress on his royal dignity, and from imitating the kings of the neighbouring states of Tyre and Egypt with whom he stood on an intimate footing. He claimed for himself a right almost impious in a mortal, namely, that the king should be the chief object in the State, that all interest should be centred in him, and that all else should be of comparatively little importance. Even Solomon's

wisdom ran headlong against this point of dispute. Samuel's warning at the time of the election of a ruler was realised to a greater extent through the wise king than through his predecessors.

Unfortunately Solomon was a younger son, to whom the throne had been allotted contrary to ordinary laws of succession, whilst Adonijah, whom a portion of the people had recognised as king, was considered the rightful heir. So long as the latter lived, Solomon's government could not be on a firm basis, and he could never feel himself secure. Adonijah had therefore to be removed; the leader of the body guard, Benaiah, forcibly entered his house and killed him. As an excuse for this act of violence, it was asserted that Adonijah had attempted to win the hand of Abishag, the young widow of David, and thus had revealed his traitorous intention of contesting the throne with his brother. No sooner had he fallen than Joab, the former adherent of Adonijah, feared that a similar fate would overtake him. This exemplary general, who had contributed so considerably to the aggrandisement of the people of Israel and to the power of the house of David, fled to the altar on Mount Zion, and clung to it, hoping to escape death. Benaiah, however, refused to respect his place of refuge, and shed his blood at the altar. In order to excuse this crime, it was circulated that David himself, on his death-bed, had impressed on his successor the duty of preventing Joab's grey head from sinking in peace to its last rest.

It is uncertain whether Benaiah was Solomon's evil adviser, or merely his instrument. Joab's death was the cause of great joy amongst the enemies of Israel, and aroused in them the courage to plan a rebellion. Adonijah's priestly partisan, Abiathar, whom Solomon did not dare to touch, was deprived of his office as high priest, and Zadok was made the sole head of the priesthood.

His descendants were invested with the dignity of high priest for over a thousand years, whilst the offspring of Abiathar were neglected. The Benjamite Shimei, who had attacked David with execrations on his flight from Jerusalem, was also executed, and it was only through this threefold deed of blood that Solomon's throne appeared to gain stability.

Solomon then directed his attention to the formation of a court of the greatest magnificence, such as was befitting the powerful king whose commands were obeyed from the boundaries of Egypt to the banks of the Euphrates. In those days it was considered a necessary adjunct to the King's dignity to possess many wives; David had about sixteen wives, but this was an insignificant number as compared with the courts of the kings of Egypt and Phœnicia, which Solomon had taken as his pattern. Solomon, therefore, formed an immense harem, as was the custom or failing of the kings in those days. His first wife was Naamah (the beautiful), an Ammonite princess; he also had other wives from the Moabite and Aramæan courts, and even from those of the Hittite and Canaanite kings; but what most gratified his pride was that the Egyptian king Psusennes, gave him his daughter as a wife. Solomon thought in acting thus he had taken a wise step, and that his country and the importance of his house would be benefited by the alliance. But the result proved the contrary. The daughter of Psusennes was naturally received with every mark of attention in the Israelites' capital, she became the first queen in Solomon's harem, but it seemed to him a disgrace that he could not place a magnificent palace at the disposal of this queen. What was the cedar palace built by David on Mount Zion, when compared with the gigantic edifices and labyrinth-like palaces of the kings of Egypt?

Solomon therefore determined to build a palace worthy of her. Through the alliance with Egypt

changes of immense extent had occurred in Israel, horses and chariots had been introduced. Solomon had entered into close and friendly connection with Hiram, king of Tyre, with whom David had already established a neighbourly intimacy. He appears to have married a daughter of Hiram, too, and this close bond between Solomon and Hiram seems to have led to important and extensive undertakings. The establishment of a large harem demanded an immense body of servants. Solomon had a most brilliant court. The ambassadors of tributary and friendly powers had to be received with great pomp, for Solomon laid great weight on the display of splendour, and his court demanded the use of large sums of money. As he could not otherwise obtain supplies for his enormous expenditure—the royal house not having any extensive properties in its own right—the people had to defray the cost. The whole land was divided into twelve parts, and a Governor was placed over each division to see that the inhabitants contributed every year one month's provisions; the purpose of this division seems to have been that the old system of tribal isolation might cease. A superior, or Vizier, was appointed over these twelve officials, whose duty it was to see that the tribute of natural products was sent in regularly.

Solomon displayed his increased grandeur in his buildings. He was anxious in the first instance to raise a splendid temple to the God of Israel in the capital of his country. It could not be a matter of indifference to him that in the neighbouring lands of Egypt and Phœnicia, with the rulers of which he was intimately acquainted, gigantic temples were raised for the various gods, whilst in his country the sanctuary was merely placed in a tent. Solomon, therefore immediately after his accession to the throne, made preparations for commencing the erection of a sacred edifice; the place was already

chosen. It was to be on Mount Moriah, to the north-east of the city, where David had raised an altar after the pestilence had ceased. Silver and gold had been collected for the purpose, but building materials, stones and cedar wood had still to be procured; even beams and blocks had to be hewn out of the rocks. The beams for the walls were made so as to dovetail, and were thus easily joined. But whence could they procure workmen for this troublesome business of hewing, preparing and conveying the stones? Solomon had learnt from Pharaoh Psusennes, his father-in-law, the means of obtaining workmen without incurring heavy expense —viz., by employing the remainder of the Canaanite population still living in the country. Although Saul had begun to decrease their numbers, he could not proceed against them with his full strength, on account of his continual strife with David. David had left them undisturbed, so they lived quietly and mixed peacefully with the Israelites, and served the king faithfully in his wars against the Philistines and other nations. Solomon, on the contrary, declared the remnant of the Ammonites, Hittites, Perizzites and Hivites, as well as the Jebusites (whom David had permitted to live in the outskirts of Jerusalem), to be bondsmen, and compelled them to perform the hardest labour. They numbered 150,000 youths and able-bodied men, and comprised the working class. More than 3,000 Israelite superintendents kept the enslaved natives to their work. A superior officer, Adoniram, watched over the superintendents and the workmen. Eighty thousand of these unhappy beings worked in the stone quarries day and night by the light of lamps. They were under the direction of a man from Biblos (Giblim), who understood the art of hewing heavy blocks from the rocks and of bringing the edges into the necessary shape for dovetailing. Twenty thousand slaves removed the heavy blocks from the mouth

of the quarry and carried them to the building site.

Hiram, the King of Tyre, Solomon's friend, supplied cedar and cypress wood. The trees were felled on Lebanon, for which purpose Hiram placed skilled workmen at Solomon's disposal. The trunks were forwarded from Lebanon to Tyre or to the other harbours by means of rafts till they reached the port of Jaffa, whence they were conveyed with much toil over hills and dales to Jerusalem, a distance of at least ten hours' journey. As the Canaanite slaves were not sufficiently numerous for the removal of the cedar and cypress trees and for their conveyance to their destination, Solomon employed Israelites to assist in the work, thirty thousand being impressed for the duty. Each ten thousand were sent for a month to work in the forests, to fell the trees, and convey them to their destination. After a month had passed, the workmen were relieved by ten thousand others. These thirty thousand Israelites were not enslaved—they remained free and even received wages—but they were not allowed to withdraw voluntarily from the work.

It was not to be expected that Hiram would cut down his cedar and cypress forests, or that he would place carpenters and builders at Solomon's disposal, without receiving some return. So long as the buildings were in course of completion Solomon paid him an annual amount of corn, wine and oil, in the delivery of which tribute the people were probably employed. But Hiram was also obliged to advance gold for the adornment of the interior of the temple. Solomon's fleet had not yet introduced the precious metal. In return for the money, Solomon yielded up to Hiram twenty towns on the borders of Phœnicia, and the territory of Israel in the tribe of Asher. Though these were not important and did not please Hiram, still it was a transference of Israelite territory to

the hands of the Phœnicians. Hiram permitted various races to colonise the towns, from whom the territory received the name "Gelil Haggaim," later Galilea (the district of nations). As soon as the stones and blocks of wood had been removed to the building site of the temple, the erection of which was to occupy three years, the work was commenced.

The temple was composed of blocks of wood, and the walls were covered with cedar planks. On these were traced designs of palms, open flower cups and cherubim (winged heads with human faces), and these designs were inlaid with gold. The temple was sixty yards long, twenty yards wide, and thirty yards high. It was divided into the Holy of Holies (Debir, the inner chamber, a square of about twenty yards), and the Holy place (Hechal, which was forty yards long). The Holy of Holies seems to have been situated on higher ground than the sanctuary. At the sides were two cherubim of gilded olive wood, each ten yards high, the wings of which were five yards wide. At the entrance of the sanctuary was an open vestibule (Ulam), which was of the same width as the sanctuary, and ten yards in length, and in front of this hall there were artistically wrought columns of bronze. The artist, Hiram, was a half Jew, his father being a Syrian and his mother a Napthalite. The Holy of Holies was turned towards the west, so as to face the rising sun; the gates were of olive wood, supported by gilded cherubim, and it was adorned with palms and flower cups. The folding doors of the sanctuary, made of cypress wood, were ornamented in a like manner, and the floor was of cypress wood inlaid with gold; only the cherubim, intended to support the ark of the covenant, in which the books of the law were kept, were visible. In the sanctuary there was an altar of cedar wood gilded on all sides, with five gilded candlesticks at each side and a large gilded table on which were

placed twelve loaves. The temple was surrounded by an extensive courtyard. Inside the vestibule stood a large iron altar, and a spacious water trough called the "iron sea," adorned with a border of open flowercups and lily-buds, and on the lower part were colocynths. This water trough was supported by twelve iron bulls, each three of which turned in a different direction. The water was intended for washing the hands and feet of the high priest whenever he entered the sanctuary, and probably a tap was used to make the water flow. Ten small water carriers on wheels, artistically engraved, were pushed to any spot where they might be wanted. Solomon had large quantities of articles prepared for use in the temple, and also vessels for the sacrificial rites and for incense. The whole building inside and outside was stamped with the impress of wealth and grandeur. At the completion of the building, its consecration was performed (1007) with solemn rites. The erection of the temple had occupied seven years, and the month selected for the consecration was that in which the field work and vintage ended. The chiefs of all the tribes and the elders of families were invited, and people streamed from every quarter to gaze in astonishment at the splendours of the temple and to be present at the unaccustomed sight. The solemnities commenced by the transfer of the sanctuary from Mount Zion, the town of David, to Mount Moriah.

The rods attached to the ark were those which had been used during the wanderings in the desert. They were so displayed that all present could see that holy relic of past ages, the two stone tables containing the ten commandments. During the transfer of the ark of the covenant and during the consecration, many thousands of sacrifices were offered, and psalms were also sung. No sooner had the ark of the covenant been brought into the Holy

of Holies than a thick cloud filled the body of the temple, so that the Aaronites were interrupted in their service. This was considered a token of God's mercy, and a sign that the consecration had been performed in the spirit of God's wish. The pervading feelings of the assembled masses were therefore joyous, elevated and pious. The king gave expression to the general feeling in a few grave words: "God has promised to dwell in a cloud. I have built a dwelling for thee, O God—an abode for thee to dwell in for ever." Mount Moriah thus appeared like Mount Sinai, on which the voice of God had been revealed in a dense cloud. With awestruck gaze the people believed that from between the two cherubim, God would exhort them as to the course they were to take. A prophet who was present (perhaps Ahijah, of Shiloh) announced to King Solomon in the name of God, "If thou wilt walk in my law, and obey my commands and fulfil my behests, then I will fulfil unto thee the promise I made unto David, thy father—'I shall dwell in the midst of the sons of Israel, and I will not desert my people.'"

The nation repaired joyfully to Jerusalem at the autumn festivals, which occurred simultaneously with the consecration. Deep was the impression made by this temple, gleaming with gold and bronze, sumptuous and imposing in its structure, which contained no visible image of the Deity, but was only filled with His invisible presence. The house of God offered something tangible to those whose imaginations could not conceive anything spiritual unallied to some perceptible form. The temple was the pride and strength of Israel, and the delight of its eyes. With the consecration was inaugurated a religious service such as had been impossible within the narrow limits of the sanctuary in Shiloh, and during the transition period in the tent at Zion. The priesthood had certainly existed

even in former times, and had been specially reserved for the descendants of Aaron. It was only under Solomon that a high priest was put at the head of the others, and that gradations in rank were introduced. Azariah, the son of Zadok, had been advanced to the office of high priest after the death of his father, and was assisted by the inferior priests. A new arrangement was substituted for the Levites, who were subordinate to the priests. A part of them performed sacrificial services. Another part kept guard at the four sides of the temple, and had the supervision of the vessels and the requisites for the temple service. Lastly, certain families took part in the singing and instrumental music that accompanied the services. It was the temple and the arrangements connected with it, that actually established Jerusalem in the position of the capital of the country. Pilgrims from all the tribes attended the autumnal festival there, in order to be present at the solemn divine service, in which they could not participate at their tribal altar. Jerusalem thus gradually became an important commercial town, in which foreign goods and curiosities appeared, and attracted even greater numbers of visitors from all the tribes. Jerusalem, the youngest of the cities in the land of Israel, superseded and outvied all the more ancient towns.

Solomon gave orders that the capital should be fortified on all sides, and that the temple should also be included within the limits of the fortifications. The erection of the royal palace occupied a period of more than thirteen years. It consisted of a series of buildings which extended over a great area on the northern wing of the quarter called Millo. The nearest entrance to it was the House of Lebanon Wood, which took its name from the numerous pillars of cedar which stood there, fifteen in each row. This house was the Armoury, for the king's protection. Here thirteen hundred guards

kept watch; they were provided with spears and shields of gold, and acted as the king's attendants when he proceeded to the temple. Great attention was given by Solomon to the arrangements for the justice or throne chamber. It had a floor inlaid with beams of cedar and adorned with gold fretwork. In this hall Solomon's throne was placed. It was considered a marvellous curiosity, and was ornamented with ivory and inlaid with gold. It was mounted by six steps, and on each step were two cleverly-designed lions, the symbol of power and of royal dignity. The seat was supported at each side by arms, and on it were also two lions. In the hall of public justice Solomon heard contesting parties and pronounced judgment: he considered his office of judge, one of the most important and holiest duties of his kingly dignity. Here he also received the ambassadors of the various countries who attended his court, to offer their homage or negotiate new treaties with him. A special palace was built for the king, his servants and his wives, a separate house being reserved for the Egyptian princess. It appears that her removal from David's house to her own residence was effected with great pomp.

Probably Solomon had an aqueduct built so as to supply the town of Jerusalem and the temple plentifully with water from the spring of Etam, which was two hours' journey from Jerusalem. The practice of building splendid edifices of cedar was not confined to Solomon, but the great nobles and princes who lived in Jerusalem, the high officers, and favourites, all followed his example. With the wealth that streamed into the land through the opening of three important channels, the love of show which was shared by the king and the higher classes could be freely gratified. Phœnician merchants of high standing who carried on a large wholesale trade, money changers, men of wealth who lent money on interest, now settled in Jerusalem. They

composed a special corporation or guild, and were under the protection of the treaty between Solomon and Hiram. They were permitted to live according to their own laws, and were even allowed to practise their religious or rather idolatrous rites. The three great sources of wealth were the *Powerful Position of the State*, the *Alliance with Egypt*, and the *Indian Trade*. Those princes who had entered into treaties with David confirmed them with his successor, and other potentates sought his friendship. On swearing allegiance, all these princes and nations sent quantities of the customary tribute and gifts, such as gold and silver vessels, valuable garments, spices, horses and mules. The alliance with Egypt was also the source of considerable additions to the national wealth, as that kingdom provided horses for the mountainous districts, and the war chariots which were in great demand in foreign parts. Thus the princes of Aram and of the territories on the Euphrates procured their horses and chariots from Egypt, which had supplied Solomon with the same war materials. The latter established a station for riders and horses on the plain not far from the sea. He kept twelve thousand horses and fourteen hundred war chariots (each having two horses attached), and for these spacious buildings, containing four thousand stalls, were required. Solomon's greatest gains, however, were acquired in trade with India. The journey to this far distant country was attended with insuperable difficulties so long as the country on the Red Sea was rendered unsafe by the uncivilized and predatory bands who dwelt there. By his alliance with Hiram, Solomon had opened up a safer and nearer route to India. The strip of land extending from the southern border of Judah to the eastern coast of the Red Sea, the Points Elath and Eziongeber, had been rendered accessible. The caravans of laden camels could proceed

in safety from Jerusalem and from the coast to the northern point of the Red Sea. At Hiram's suggestion, Solomon had a fleet of strong and large ships (ships of Tarshish) built and armed on the coast at Eziongeber. Hiram sent his most skilful sailors who knew the route thoroughly, to man the vessels. Israelites of the tribes of Asher and Zebulun, who lived on the coast and were acquainted with the sea, were also employed.

When the Israelite fleet was complete, it sailed out of the harbour of Eziongeber to the Red Sea, which separates Palestine from Egypt, Nubia, and Abyssinia, and proceeded along the coast to the Gulf which washes the shores of Southern Arabia, as far as the mouth of the Indus, in the land of Ophir (now called Scind). After a period of two years, Solomon's fleet returned richly laden with the proceeds of this first expedition. Vast droves of camels carried the treasures to Jerusalem, and created great astonishment amongst the nation. They brought more than four hundred talents (kikhar) of gold, silver in great quantities, ivory, ebony, apes, and exquisitely-coloured peacocks, sandal-wood, and sweet-smelling plants. Solomon caused a throne to be made with the ivory, and the sandal-wood was used for ornamenting the harps and lutes of the musicians who played in the temple. The palings of the bridge which led from the palace to the temple were also made of this rare and costly wood. Solomon sent his fleet several times to Ophir or India, and every time new riches and curiosities were brought into the country. The port Elath became a place of great importance. It was colonized by Judæans, and the land of Israel thus extended from the extreme end of the Red Sea to the Euphrates. In order to convey horses and chariots from Aramæa to the Euphrates, as also the various goods from Phœnicia, roads had to be made, and mea-

sures taken to ensure the safety of the caravans. It was not easy to make roads in a mountainous country, so as to enable the beasts of burden and also the horses and chariots to traverse long distances where rocky heights or precipitous slopes and rolling masses of stone offered continual hindrance to progress. Solomon, however, had roads made which led from Jerusalem to the north; these were the *king's high-roads*.

He probably used the services of the Canaanite natives, who were obliged as bondsmen to take part in this work. Heights were levelled, depths filled up, and stones removed. The roads were passable by carriages, which could proceed without hindrance from the south to the north, and the caravans passing from the Jordan to the sea could travel without difficulty. A chain of fortresses protected the roadways, and served as resting places. Besides these stations for riders and carriages, Solomon also founded towns for storing goods; these were also used to house the grain for future years of scarcity.

Thus Solomon had settled the affairs of Israel, and had provided for its future security. He had no sharp-sighted counsellor, such as David had had in Ahithophel, to assist him in establishing order; his own wisdom was his sole counsellor. But he chose responsible officers, who gave effect to his instructions and carried out the plans which he organized. He established new offices, in order to extend his court. For the better reception of strangers he had placed over his numerous household a major-domo (al-hab-Baith). Ahishar was the name of this officer. The twelve officials who provided for the wants of the household were supervised by a chief whose name was Azariah-ben-Nathan. A high official, Adoniram, the son of Abda, was also placed (al-ham-Mas) over the many thousand bondsmen who worked in the streets and

fortresses. Thus three high posts were newly created by Solomon.

Its great extent and the riches which Solomon had amassed enabled the kingdom of Israel to hold its place amongst the greatest nations in the ancient world. Princes and nations who lived in strife with each other sought the aid of the ruler of this mighty dominion, and called upon him to act as arbitrator, for his wisdom was famed far and wide. The greatest blessing in Solomon's reign, was the peace and undisturbed quiet which obtained throughout the land. From Dan unto Beersheba the Israelites could peacefully enjoy their home, "every one under his own vine and under his own fig tree."

The commercial treaties, the prosperity of the country, the security to life arising from the long peace existing in Solomon's reign, all contributed to attract the more distant surrounding tribes of Moabites, Ammonites, Idumæans, and even Egyptians into the country. It is also probable that the peculiar and higher religious culture of the Israelites when contrasted with the practices of idolatry, and the magnificent temple in Jerusalem, induced the more enlightened foreigners to seek shelter under the "wings of the God of Israel." The country, the people, and the God of Israel acquired a wide-spread renown in Solomon's time. The Israelite mariners, who visited so many harbours, coastlands, and marts, and the Israelite merchants who entered into connections with foreign parts, carried reports of their fatherland to the remotest climes and nations. The praise of the wise, mighty, and brilliant king Solomon was universally rung in his times. In the eyes of the world he elevated the name of the God whom he honoured, and to whose glory he had erected a magnificent temple. The Israelite sailors and merchants

became unconsciously the first messengers and pioneers of the Religion of Israel amongst the idolatrous nations.

One day Jerusalem was surprised by a marvellous embassage. A wise queen, from the spice-bearing land of Sabia (Sheba), which is situated on the Arabian coast of the Red Sea, was about to visit Jerusalem. As she had heard so much of the greatness of Solomon and in praise of the God of Israel, she wished to see, with her own eyes, how much truth or falsehood lay in the reports which had come to her ears. She was received with marked attention by Solomon, and had many interviews with him. The queen (whom tradition calls Belkis) greatly admired his wisdom, and was much impressed with the temple which he had erected to God, and with the brilliancy of his court. It is said that she asked him enigmatic riddles in order to test his powers, and these he answered in a manner which excited her astonishment.

Solomon's brilliant rule, however, became the source of a serious division amongst the tribes which he had so unavailingly striven to consolidate into one indissoluble whole. Notwithstanding that the temple formed a bond of union to the whole people, and that Solomon had tried to abolish the tribal isolation which prevailed, he succeeded only in the case of Benjamin, which became more closely united with Judah. This was owing to the fact that the temple was built on Benjamite territory, and consequently several Benjamite families had settled in the capital. Probably Solomon also preferred the tribe of Benjamin and his ancestral tribe to the other tribes. The mutual dislike of the houses of Israel and Judah, or of the northern and southern tribes, had not ceased. Amongst the northern tribes a deep sense of discontent prevailed against Solomon, despite the height to which he had raised them; they

still resented the pressure put upon them to forward regular supplies for the court, and to perform compulsory service in the erection of public buildings. Their discontent was not expressed aloud, but it only needed an opportunity for it to find free vent. Wise as Solomon was, he had not sufficient foresight to perceive that his faults were sure to weaken the future security of the State. Amongst the officials whom Solomon employed to supervise the buildings was an Ephraimite who was sensible, courageous and ambitious. This was Jeroboam the son of Nebat, from the town of Zereda or Zorathan, on the other side of the Jordan, and his mother was a widow. At an early age he was withdrawn from his home and was thus enabled to develop his energies without any counteracting influence. Jeroboam had supervised the erection of the walls of Jerusalem and had displayed great skill and firmness towards the bondsmen. Solomon was, in fact, so well pleased with him that he bestowed on him a high position in the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh. Here Jeroboam had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the discontent of the people, which was probably strongest amongst the ever-discontented Ephraimites. The popular feeling accorded well with his ambitious plans, and he decided to utilise it when a favourable opportunity should occur.

Solomon was guilty of the folly of permitting sacrificial altars to be built for various idols. It may have been his foreign wives who induced him to make this concession, or perhaps it was due to the foreigners, the Phœnicians and other races, who had taken up their residence in Jerusalem and had received permission to worship their gods in the land of Israel according to their habitual custom. However this may have been, altars were raised on the Mount of Olives, even on its

highest points, in honour of Astarte of the Zidonians, Milcom of the Ammonites, Chemosh of the Moabites, and other idols. The religious strength of the nation was not so deeply rooted that the people could witness all kinds of idolatrous practices without falling into the errors of idol-worship themselves. A prophet, Ahijah of Shiloh, had the courage to reprimand the king, and to warn him of the danger which his conduct rendered imminent. Solomon, however, seems to have given little heed to his representations, until the prophet, indignant at the king's obtuseness, determined to use Jeroboam (whose ambitious schemes he probably saw through) as the instrument of Solomon's destruction. When Jeroboam left Jerusalem, the prophet approached him, seized his garment, tore it into twelve pieces, and handing him ten of them he said, "Take these ten pieces, they portray the ten tribes, which will separate themselves from the house of David, and recognise thee as their king." Jeroboam wanted no further encouragement to mature his plans, since a prophet had commended them. He hurried to the territories of Ephraim, and called on the Ephraimites to separate themselves from the house of David. Meanwhile Solomon had received tidings of the event, and before the revolution could spread, he sent his guards to kill the rebel. Jeroboam then fled to Egypt, where a new dynasty now occupied the throne. Shishak (Sheshenk, Sesonchosis, 980-959) was the first king of the new line. Under his rule was severed the bond which had united Israel and Egypt since Solomon's marriage with the Egyptian princess. Shishak in fact was inimical to the Israelite nation, which had become more powerful than was agreeable to him. He therefore received Jeroboam with kindness, intending to use him against Solomon. Shishak also gave a friendly reception and protection to an Idumæan

prince, who had special reasons for avenging himself on the Israelite nation. Hadad (or Adad) was a relation of the Idumæan king whom David had conquered. He had when a boy escaped the massacre, instigated by Joab in consequence of a revolution in Idumæa. When Shishak ascended the throne, the Idumæan prince hurried to Egypt and was graciously received. Shishak gave him the queen's sister for a wife, and his first-born son (Genubath) grew up amongst the Egyptian princes. Hadad also acquired possessions in Egypt, and was honoured in every way; notwithstanding this Hadad yearned to return to Edom, and to regain the territories which had been snatched away from him. He carried this desire into effect with the aid of Shishak, who was fully aware that the warlike spirit which had obtained under David and Joab, had diminished under Solomon's peaceful rule, and that a petty warfare in the mountainous districts could not do himself much harm and might be productive of great benefit. Hadad and the troops which he had mustered in Idumæa, did great damage to Solomon's caravans, which carried goods from the sea-shore to Elath, and thence to and fro from the Israelite boundaries; and Solomon's warriors were powerless to prevent these attacks.

Yet another cloud was gathering in the north unnoticed by Solomon, which threatened Israel with future destruction. One of the servants of King Hadadeser, named Rezon (of Zobah), whom David had overthrown, had taken to flight after the defeat of his sovereign; he assembled a predatory troop, and made raids in the districts lying between the Euphrates and the northern branches of the Lebanon. Rezon's troops gradually increased in numbers, and with their numbers grew his courage and power. At last he ventured to proceed against the ancient city of Damascus. He succeeded in capturing it and in

having himself chosen king. Rezon also indulged in forays on the Israelites and their allies in the north without any opposition on the part of Solomon. He either had a dislike to war, or he had no troops available to combat the attacks from the north and south. Thus arose from small beginnings, powers inimical to Israel, which might easily have been crushed in the bud. Besides this, there was yet in store for Israel another internal breach in the State.

Solomon, however, did not live to see the impending evils and the decay of his kingdom carried into effect. He died in peace at the age of about sixty years (in 977). His body was buried in the rocky mausoleum of the kings which David had laid out in the south of Mount Zion, where he was no doubt interred with great pomp. It was said later on, that Solomon as well as his father had heaped up untold treasures and wealth in these vaults and cells, which were discovered many centuries after by the later Jewish kings.

Although Solomon had numerous wives, it appears that he left but few children, a son named Rehoboam and two daughters, Taphath and Basmath, whom their father married to two of his officers. Posterity which has greatly exaggerated Solomon's wisdom and mental faculties, also attributed to him the power over mystic spirits and demons, who obeying his will, could be invoked or dispelled as he chose. Even a ring on which his name was engraven was supposed to exercise a mighty spell over the demons, and keep them in subjection.

The power to which Solomon had elevated Israel resembled that of a magic world built up by spirits. The spell was broken at his death.

## CHAPTER X.

### SECESSION OF THE TRIBES.

Accession of Rehoboam—Jeroboam's return—The King at Shechem—The Secession of the Ten Tribes—Election of Jeroboam—New Alliances—Rezon and Shishak—Fortification of Shechem—Jeroboam's idolatry — Ahijah's rebuke — Religion in Judah — Abijam — Asa — Nadab — Baasha — Wars between Asa and Baasha—Defeat of Zerah—Benhadad—Elah—Zimri—Omri—Civil war—Samaria built—Omri's policy—Alliances with Eth-baal and Tyre—Ahab: his character—Jezebel—The Priests of Baal—Elijah—Naboth's vineyard—Elijah at Carmel—War with Benhadad—Death of Ahab and Jehoshaphat—Ahaziah's Accession—Jehoram—Elijah and Elisha—Jehu—Death of Jezebel.

977—887 B.C.

For the first time since the monarchical government had been established in Israel, the next heir to the throne could succeed without disturbance or contest. Rehoboam, more fortunate than his father and grandfather, found himself when he ascended the throne, ruler over a mighty and important country. Many nations bowed in allegiance to him, and he could indulge in golden dreams of power and happiness. His undisturbed accession was perhaps owing to the fact that he had no brother, or that Solomon's strict laws regarding private property had also extended to the rights of succession. Be that as it may, Rehoboam ascended the throne of his father without opposition. In fact, disputed accessions between brothers, such as had been the case at the death of David, were not of frequent occurrence in Jerusalem. Nor would Rehoboam have been equal to such contests. He by no means resembled his father, but was greatly his inferior in mental ability. Like all princes who, born in the purple, have no occasion to display very

striking characteristic features, he was thoughtless, haughty, and at the same time so wanting in self-reliance that he could not decide for himself. He had neither martial abilities nor an appreciation for what was great. The throne was to him the ideal of power, peace, and enjoyment of life's pleasures. This dream was but of short duration, and his awakening was speedy. He was unexpectedly confronted with an enemy who robbed him of power and peace, and who caused a breach in the state of Israel which could never again be healed.

Jeroboam, the Ephraimite who had raised the flag of rebellion in the last years of Solomon's reign, and who, on the failure of his attempt, had fled to Egypt, returned to his native land immediately on receipt of the news of Solomon's death. He thought to recommence his ambitious schemes, as they had been approved by a prophet. Probably his protector, Shishak, the king of Egypt, assisted him and permitted him to proceed by sea to the Israelite port. No sooner had this bold Ephraimite arrived in Shechem, the second city of importance in the kingdom, than the Shechemites, ever ready for sedition, began a revolt. Jeroboam was invited to join the meeting of the people, or rather he instigated the holding of such an assembly in order to consider the steps necessary to attain the desired end without bloodshed.

The elders of other tribes were likewise invited to take part in the projects of the Shechemites, and thus their rebellious undertaking assumed the dimensions of a combined declaration of the will of the nation. It was first of all decided that the elders of the tribes should not, as heretofore, repair to Jerusalem in order to pay homage to the new king, but that he should be invited to receive their allegiance at Shechem. This was the first step in the rebellion. Rehoboam determined to accept their invitation, but probably he did so unwillingly and in

the expectation that his presence would put a stop to any intended insurrection. It was a momentous time, and fraught with wide-spread results for the kingdom of Israel.

Rehoboam was accompanied to Shechem by his council, consisting of the elder members who had served his father, and of younger members whom he himself had selected. In order to provide for all cases, he took with him Adoniram, the overseer of the slaves, whose angry glance and cane kept the unwilling labourers in submission. When Rehoboam arrived in Shechem, the representatives of the tribes came before him in order to explain their grievances. Jeroboam, who had been chosen as their mouthpiece, placed the position of the nation before the king in strong language: "Thy father put a heavy yoke on the people and made them submit to heavy burdens. If thou wilt lighten this heavy yoke we will submit to thee." Struck by this bold language, Rehoboam concealed his anger as best he could, and told them to return for his reply in three days. He knew not what answer to give the representatives of the tribes. He therefore consulted his council. The elders were unanimously for a mild treatment, the younger men for severity, and the unwise king followed the advice of the latter. When on the third day Jeroboam and the elders came to him for his answer, he replied in words which he thought would annihilate them: "My little finger is stronger than my father's loins. If he scourged you with rods, I will scourge you with scorpions." Jeroboam had expected and reckoned on no other reply. Turning to the elders he said, "What share have we in David, and what inheritance in the son of Jesse? Return to your tents, O Israel, and thou, David, see to thine own house!" Jeroboam then unfurled the standard of rebellion and assembled the Shechemites, who willingly mustered around him in order to

display their enmity towards Rehoboam. All the jealousy and hatred that the Ephraimites had cherished during the reigns of David and Solomon on account of the oppression and supposed humiliation to which they had to submit, now burst forth. They seized the opportunity to free themselves from the yoke of David and to place themselves, as they had done in the days of the Judges, at the head of the tribes. Sword in hand the Shechemites, headed by Jeroboam, attacked the house in which Rehoboam dwelt. He sent Adoniram, the overseer of the slaves, to chastise the ringleaders like rebellious slaves. A hail of stones overpowered him, and he sank lifeless to the ground. Rehoboam, whose life was in danger, took flight from Shechem in his chariot and reached Jerusalem, leaving a breach which no one could heal.

Indignant and dispirited as Rehoboam felt at the turn affairs had taken in Shechem, he felt himself obliged to ascertain how far he could count on the fidelity of the nation before taking any fresh steps. What should he do if the tribes nearest to the capital, led away by the example of the Shechemites, should also renounce their allegiance to him? Where would the secession end? From this care, however, he was soon freed. The tribe of Judah, which was intimately connected with the house of David and considered that house its most precious ornament, remained faithful to Rehoboam. The tribe of Simeon was merely a subsidiary of that of Judah, and could not be considered independent. The tribe of Benjamin also remained faithful to Rehoboam. It was closely connected with that of Judah, and its fortunes could no longer be parted. There were more Benjamites than Judæans living in Jerusalem. These tribes, then, held with Rehoboam. No sooner was he aware that two or three tribes would remain true to him, than he naturally entertained the idea of compelling the Shechemites

and Ephraimites to return to their allegiance by means of the sword, and he would no doubt have succeeded had not Jeroboam taken measures to turn the secession to the greatest advantage. He impressed on the Ephraimites that a king alone could ensure their safety from Rehoboam's attacks, and that by no other means could they escape the severe punishment which would await them as insurgents. They then determined to set up an opposition king. Who would be more suited for this post than Jeroboam? He alone possessed the needful courage and skill, and he was an Ephraimite. The elders of Ephraim therefore assembled, and with the adhesion of the remaining tribes, chose him as king. The other tribes therefore paid homage to Jeroboam, possibly because they also had grievances against the house of David and could expect no redress from Rehoboam. Thus the man who had risen from nothing in Zereda became king over ten tribes (977-955), including the *two* tribes of Manasseh—for so it was accounted—on the two boundaries Machir and Gilead.

Jeroboam's territory thus comprised the TEN tribes. The tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Simeon alone remained attached to the house of David. The two last named tribes, however, had no separate existence, but were merged into the tribe of Judah. The house of Israel, which had been joined with the house of Judah for barely a century, was thus again divided from it. Both kings endeavoured to secure themselves from external attacks, and to avoid a constant state of armed preparation by forming alliances, and thus breaking the power of foreign nations. Rehoboam entered into a treaty with the newly elected king of Damascus, the state founded by Rezon the bandit in Solomon's time having attained great power. Rezon, or his successor Tabrimon, had united various Aramæan districts to Damascus,

and ruled over an extensive territory. The treaty between Rehoboam and the king of Damascus prevented Jeroboam from attacking the kingdom of Judah, and pursuing it with the horrors of a long-enduring war. Jeroboam therefore formed an alliance with another power in order to exasperate and alarm the king of Judah.

A union of the two kingdoms was distasteful to both, and the difference in their histories prevented their coalescing. The house of Israel, especially the tribe of Ephraim, willingly relinquished the advantages which might accrue from a union with the house of David in order that they might not relapse into an inferior position. The more worthy in both kingdoms were probably filled with grief at the breach which had occurred, but they were unable to counteract its effects. The civil war which appeared imminent was stopped by the prophet Shemaiah, who called on the Judæans and Benjamites in God's name to desist. Slight skirmishes, however, broke out between the contiguous kingdoms, as was unavoidable between such near neighbours, but they led to no serious result.

Jeroboam was unceasingly aided in his ambitious plans by Shishak (Sheshenk), whom he is said to have married to his wife's elder sister Ano; another sister he had given in marriage to the Idumæan prince who had taken refuge with him. Shishak probably furnished him with the supplies of money to enable him to return to his fatherland, and Jeroboam seems to have formed an alliance with him adverse to Judah. Thus Rehoboam was prevented from undertaking any noteworthy steps against Israel. In order to secure himself from Egyptian and Israelite attacks, Rehoboam erected a chain of fortresses round the town in a circle which it took several hours to traverse. But they failed him in the hour of need. Shishak undertook

a war against Rehoboam in the fifth year of his reign (972) with an overwhelming force. Overcome by excess of numbers the strongholds were taken one after another by the Egyptian armies, and Shishak pressed forward as far as Jerusalem. It appears that the capital yielded without a struggle and the Egyptian king contented himself with seizing the treasures which Solomon had deposited in the palace and temple. He appropriated all the money, which was then in Jerusalem, as well as the golden shields and spears with which the king's guards accompanied him in procession to the temple. He, however, left the kingdom of Judah intact, did not even touch the walls of Jerusalem, and left Rehoboam on his throne. On his return, Shishak commemorated his deeds of prowess and his victories over Judah and other districts by records and monuments. In the ruins of a temple at Thebes, which is still preserved, the figures may be seen of decayed bodies, which may be recognised as prisoners by the cord slung round their necks. The alliance between Solomon and the king of Egypt was thus of but short duration. His son learned the futility of such a treaty, and experienced how little trust could be placed in plans and political measures apparently the outcome of the deepest calculation and forethought. Solomon had acted thoughtlessly in spite of his wisdom, in regard to the union with the daughter of Pharaoh. He had built her a special palace, and within a few years of his decease, an Egyptian king ransacked the palace and other buildings commemorative of Solomon, and plundered them of all their treasures. The grandeur and power of Solomon's kingdom was at an end.

Jeroboam fortified Shechem and built himself a palace, which served also as a citadel (Armon) for purposes of defence. On the opposite side of the

Jordan, he also fortified various towns; amongst others, Penuel (or Peniel) which might serve as a rampart against the attacks on the southern side, from Jabbok, for the Moabites and Ammonites, in consequence of what had taken place, had separated themselves from the Israelites in the same way as the Idumæans had divided themselves from the Judæans. Jeroboam was also obliged to help himself out of his difficulties by instituting changes. Guided either by habit or conviction, the families of the northern tribes continued to present themselves at Jerusalem in the autumn at the harvest time, in order to take part in the service of the invisible God. This clinging of a part of the nation to the Jewish capital was a source of great trouble to Jeroboam. How would it be if the people turned in greater numbers to the temple in Jerusalem, and if it made its peace with the house of David? Would he not be dethroned as quickly as he had attained to royalty? In order to avoid the possibility of such a fall, Jeroboam matured a wicked plan, which caused Israel to fall back into the ways of idolatry and barbarity.

Jeroboam had learnt the system of worship customary in Egypt during his protracted stay in that country, and had observed that the worship of animals and particularly of the bull, was highly conducive to the advantage of the ruler. He had observed that this animal worship served to stultify the nation, and Jeroboam thought he might turn to his own purposes a system so politic and advantageous. He therefore consulted his advisers for devising a plan by which these observances should be introduced amongst the Ten Tribes. He considered that this idol-worship might be of advantage to him in other ways, as it would keep him in favour with the court of Egypt. Israel would appear as a dependency of Egypt, and both countries,

having common religious observances and customs, would also have interests in common. The habits of Egypt were of interest to him as his wife was probably an Egyptian and connected with the royal house of Egypt. Jeroboam also studied the convenience of the tribes, he wished to relieve those who lived far off from the necessity of making long journeys at the time of harvest. When the young bull-calves had been erected, Jeroboam ordered a proclamation to the effect: "This is thy God, O Israel, who brought thee out of Egypt." In Bethel, where he himself intended to preside at the worship, he built a large temple in which he also caused a sacrificial altar to be erected. To prevent the people celebrating the Feast of Ingathering at Jerusalem, he fixed the festival a month later (in the eighth instead of the seventh month). Probably also a different reckoning was followed according to the longer solar, instead of the shorter lunar year.

The nation, as a whole, appears to have taken no offence at this alteration, but to have actually regarded it as a revival of the ancient mode of worship. The fundamental principle, the *unity* of God, was in no way affected by it. Jeroboam had not attempted to introduce polytheism, but had merely given them incarnations of the Deity to symbolize strength and fruitfulness. The people, naturally sensual, were better pleased to have the Godhead physically before them, as the *spirituality* of God, represented by no ocular demonstration, was at that period more remote from their comprehension than the fact of His *unity*. Sensual dissipations and depravity were not bound up with the worship of the bull as they had been with the Canaanite observances of Baal, and therefore they were not revolting to morality.

Thus the people gradually became accustomed to repair to Bethel or Dan for the high feasts; other-

wise they made their offerings at home, or at the nearest sacrificial place that remained from olden times. Jeroboam fully attained his object; the nation became stultified, and bowed to him in servile obedience. The tribe of Levi, however, caused him anxiety. No Levite would consent to perform the office of priest at the worship of the bull; for Samuel's prophetic teachings had made a lasting impression on this tribe. That Jeroboam might not compel their services, the Levites, who had been living in the Israelite towns, wandered forth, and settled in the kingdom of Judah, refusing to take part in the sacrifices and religious ceremonies. Now the priests had deserted him, and by refusing to participate in his arrangements had signified their disapproval. As he could not possibly manage without priests, he took any one who offered himself to serve in that capacity. At one festival he himself performed the priestly office, in order to elevate it in the eyes of the people, or perhaps in imitation of the Egyptian custom. Jeroboam was thus led step by step to destroy the original principles of Judaism.

This conduct was not allowed to pass uncondemned. The old prophet, Ahijah, of Shiloh, who had incited Nebat's ambitious son to insurrection, now lifted his voice against these proceedings. When, however, Jeroboam's wife visited him at Shiloh, to consult him about the dangerous illness of her eldest son, the prophet took the opportunity of announcing to her the approaching dissolution of the royal house. Meanwhile, Jeroboam could no longer control events so as to be re-united with the house of David. From motives of self-preservation, he was obliged to continue in the way he had chosen. The new worship was therefore retained during the existence of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, and none of Jeroboam's successors attempted to make any alteration in its form.

In the kingdom of Judah (or House of Jacob), matters had not yet arrived at so distressing a pitch. Politically weakened by the severance of the tribes and the incursions of Egypt under Shishak, its wounds were too deep to heal without the lapse of a considerable time. But Judah had not sunk in religion or morals. Rehoboam appears to have troubled himself but little concerning religious or moral conditions; he was indifferent in every respect, and his pride, having once received a blow, he seems to have passed his days in idleness. But the temple on the one hand, and the Levites on the other, appear to have counteracted the imminent sources of deterioration. Outwardly all remained as it had been in the time of Solomon; the High Altars (Bamoth) remained in existence, on which families might perform the sacrificial rites throughout the year, but at the autumn festivals the people repaired to the temple. A breach of the established order of divine service proved exceptional, and was restricted to the circle of court ladies. As Solomon permitted altars to be erected for his heathen wives, Rehoboam did not feel called upon to be more severe in his enactments. His mother Maachah, the daughter or granddaughter of Absalom, had a predilection for the immoral Canaanite worship; she erected a statue of Astarte in her palace, and maintained temple priestesses. Rehoboam permitted all this, but the unholy innovations did not spread very widely. Meanwhile, although idolatrous practices did not gain ground in the kingdom of Judah, there was no impulse towards a higher stage of moral culture under Rehoboam's government. A national weakness seemed to come over the people, as if they were in the last stage of senility. Nearly two centuries elapsed before traces of a higher spiritual force became evident. Rehoboam's reign of seventeen years was inglorious. The reign of his son Abijam (960–958) passed in a like

manner. He also indulged in petty acts of hostility against Jeroboam, but without any important result. He, too, permitted the idolatrous practices of his mother Maachah. Abijam, it appears, died young, leaving no issue, and he was therefore succeeded by his brother Asa (957–918). He again was a minor, and the queen mother Maachah held the reins of government. At first she seems to have desired to extend her idolatrous and immoral worship, but a revolution in the kingdom of Judah put an end to her projects, and changed the course of events.

Nadab, who had succeeded to the throne on the death of Jeroboam (955–954), undertook a war against the Philistines, and besieged the Danite city of Gibbethon, which the Philistines had occupied. During this campaign a soldier of the name of Baescha (Baasha) conspired against the king in the camp and killed him. From the camp Baasha proceeded to the capital, Tirzah, and destroyed the whole house of Jeroboam (954). The founder of this dynasty had not been anointed by the prophet; he was not considered inviolable, like Saul and David, and therefore the hand of the murderer was not restrained. Baasha was the first of the line of regicides amongst the Ten Tribes, and his act hastened the fate impending over the nation.

Having perpetrated the murder, he took possession of the throne and kingdom (954–933). He considered Tirzah the capital, on account of its central position. It lay in the very midst of the kingdom, and possessed the further advantage of fortifications. Had Baasha set aside the worship of the bull, he might have drawn to his side the worthier portion of the people of Judah. The latter were probably indignant at the idolatrous innovations of Maachah, which were the more reprehensible, as they were combined with the depraved habits of the temple priestesses. In Jerusalem a fear appears to have arisen lest this

worship should spread; but Asa hastened to avert the calamity. Either on his own impulse, or actuated by one of the prophets, he snatched the reins of government from the hands of the queen-mother, forbade the worship of Astarte, removed the priestesses, and burnt the disgusting picture which had been erected for worship in the valley of Kedron. Through these decisive acts Asa secured for himself the good-will of the better disposed of his people. The old inconclusive feuds arose between Asa and Baasha, and their respective kingdoms. Asa is said to have acquired several cities of Ephraim, and to have incorporated them in his own kingdom. In order to secure himself in safety from Judah, Baasha seems to have entered into a league with the king of Egypt, and to have urged him to carry war into the lands of his own foe. An Egyptian general named Zerah (Osorkon) sallied forth with a numerous body of Ethiopians, and pressed forwards as far as Mareshah, about ten leagues south-west of Jerusalem. Asa, however, marched against him with his combined forces, defeated the Ethiopian army north of Mareshah, pursued it as far as Gerar, and brought back an enormous booty to Jerusalem.

Baasha was disconcerted by these proceedings, and endeavoured to consolidate an alliance with the Aramæan king, Ben-hadad I., of Damascus, who as a friend of the kingdom of Judah, had heretofore proved an obstacle to all inimical attacks. Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimon, now cancelled his treaty with Asa, and went over to Baasha's side. He first conquered Ramah, the birth-place and residence of the prophet Samuel, which belonged to the Benjamites, and fortified it so that it served as a base whence to make raids on the neighbouring districts. Alarmed at these doings, Asa endeavoured to revive the treaty with the

king of Damascus, and sent ambassadors to him, with quantities of treasure in silver and gold, which he took both from the Temple and his palaces. Ben-hadad allowed himself to be won over; it flattered him to be thus sought after by the Israelites, to whom he had formerly been obliged to pay tribute. He resolved to utilize the weakness of both sides, and he commanded an army to effect an entrance into the north of the kingdom of Israel; he subjugated Ijon, Dan, and the contiguous region of Abel-beth-maachah; and also reduced the district around the Tiberias, and the mountainous lands of the tribe of Naphtali. Asa was thus saved at the expense of his brother nation; and Baasha was forced to abandon his desire for conquest, and to relinquish the possession of Ramah.

Asa now summoned all the men capable of bearing arms to assist in the destruction of the fortifications of Ramah. The death of Baasha, which occurred soon after this (in 933), and a revolution which ensued, left Asa free from menace on that side. Mizpah, a town lying very high in a favourable situation, was made into an important citadel by Asa. He also built a deep and roomy cistern in the rocks, in order to have stores of water in case of a siege.

Meanwhile, in the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, terrible events were happening, which were productive of a change to both kingdoms. Baasha was succeeded by his son Elah (933–932). He was addicted to idleness and drunkenness. Whilst his warriors were engaged in battle with the Philistines and were attacking Gibbethon, he passed his days in drinking bouts. This circumstance was taken advantage of by Simri (Zimri), his servant and the commander of one-half of the war-chariots, which had remained behind in Tirzah. Whilst Elah was dissipating in the house of the captain of his palace, Zimri killed him (in 932), at

the same time destroying the entire house of Baasha and not even sparing his friends. He then as a matter of course, ascended the throne, but his reign was of the shortest; it only lasted one week. No sooner had the news of the king's murder reached the army, then besieging Gibbethon, than they elected the Israelite general Omri, as king. He repaired to the capital, but finding the gates closed against him, laid siege to the city and effected a breach in the wall. When Zimri discovered that he was lost, in anticipation of a disgraceful end he set fire to the palace and perished in the flames. He was the third amongst five kings of Israel, who had died an unnatural death, and only two of them had been buried in the mausoleum for the kings erected by Jeroboam. A fourth king was soon to be added to the list. Omri, a warrior, expected to obtain the empty throne forthwith, but he met with opposition. One part of the population of the capital had chosen another king, Tibni the son of Ginath; he was probably a native of the city. Thus two parties were formed in the capital, and the streets were no doubt deluged with their blood. A civil war was the only thing wanting in the domains of Ephraim to make the measure of misery full to overflowing. For three years the partisan conflict was raging (932-928); at length the party of Omri gained the upper hand. Tibni was killed, and Omri remained sole ruler (928). He, however, felt ill at ease in Tirzah; the palace had been burnt since the death of Zimri, and disturbances had no doubt arisen from the protracted anarchy. The conquered party was hostile to him, and Omri therefore transferred the seat of the empire to another town. He could not select Shechem, as the restless and rebellious spirit of the inhabitants would not permit him to live in safety, and there was no other important town situated in the midst of the country. Omri therefore deter-

mined to build a new capital. A hill, surmounted by a tableland, a few hours north-west of Shechem, seemed to him the fittest spot. He bought it of its owner, Shemer, erected buildings, a palace and other houses, fortified it and called it *Shomron* (Samaria). Whence did he obtain inhabitants for the newly founded city? He probably adopted a course similar to David's in the case of Jerusalem, and caused the warriors attached to his cause to settle there. A year after his victory over the opposition king, Omri left Tirzah and removed to Samaria, which was destined to become the rival of Jerusalem for a space of two hundred years, and then after two centuries of desertion to revive, and once more wage war against Judah and Jerusalem. Samaria inherited in a tenfold degree the hatred of Shechem against Jerusalem. The new city gave its name to the kingdom of Ten Tribes, and the land was thence called the land of Samaria.

Omri, the first king of Samaria, was neither a strong nor a warlike leader, but he was a wise man. The crown which he had acquired, more through the force of circumstances than through his own force of will, did not satisfy him. He wished to make his court and his people great, respected and wealthy, and he hoped that the prosperity of the days of Solomon might be restored to Israel. It is true that the nation was divided, and thereby weakened. But was it necessary that war must always be carried on between the two portions, and that the sword must destroy them? Connected as they were through tribal relations and common interests, could they not be peacefully united, and thus become again amalgamated?

Omri endeavoured, in the first place, to make peace with the representative of the royal house of David, and to impress on him the advantages to

both of them of pursuing an amicable policy. They might in that way obtain their former sway over the countries which had been once tributary to them. For a long time friendly relations were actually established between the two kingdoms; and they supported, instead of opposing each other. Omri cherished to a great, perhaps even to a too great degree, the aspiration for a friendly alliance with Phœnicia. He desired that a part of the riches which their extensive maritime expeditions and trade introduced into their country, might also flow into his own kingdom. At this time various kings had waded to the throne in Tyre through the slaughter of their predecessors, until at length Ethbaal (Ithobal), a priest of Astarte, ascended the throne, after the murder of his predecessor Phalles. The disastrous occurrences in Phœnicia had greatly weakened the land. The great families had been compelled to emigrate, and had founded colonies on the north coast of Africa. The kingdom of Damascus, which had acquired great power, sought to obtain possession of the fruitful coast-line of Phœnicia; Ethbaal therefore, had to strengthen himself by means of alliances. The kingdom of Ten Tribes was nearest to him.

Omri and Ethbaal therefore had mutual interests, and formed a treaty of offence and defence. The league desired by both powers was secured by an intermarriage. Omri's son Ahab married Ethbaal's daughter Jezebel (Jezabel or Isebel), a marriage which was fraught with disastrous consequences for the world.

Omri, fortified by this alliance, could now venture to think of undertaking warlike expeditions. He captured several towns from Moab, which had emancipated itself under Jeroboam's rule, and compelled it to become once more tributary. He forced the Moabites to send herds of oxen and rams every year as tribute. As, however, a sort of alliance

existed between Moab and Aram, and an increase to Israel's power was watched by Aram with a jealous eye, the Aramæan king of Damascus, Ben-hadad I., declared war against Omri and recovered some of the cities he had taken. Omri was forced to accept peace with Ben-hadad on hard terms, and bound himself to open the caravan-roads through the kingdom of Israel and to allow a free passage through the land.

Omri therefore entered into a close alliance with the kingdom of Tyre and pursued the plan of assimilating his people to their Canaanite neighbours. Why should he endeavour to keep Israel separate from the surrounding peoples? Would it not be wiser and better to permit the kingdom of Ten Tribes to assume a Phœnician or Tyrian character? United as they were in language and customs, might not the two races become more closely welded together if the Phœnician form of worship were introduced into the kingdom of Israel? Omri led the way to this union. He introduced the service of Baal and Astarte as the acknowledged mode of worship; he built a temple for Baal in his capital of Samaria, ordained priests and commanded that sacrifices should be universally made to the Phœnician idols. He desired that the worship of the bull as observed in Bethel and Dan, should be abolished. It seemed to him as too distinctly Israelite in character, and as likely to maintain the division between the Israelites and Phœnicians. Whether Jehovah was adored with or without a visible image, He was still in too striking a contrast to the Tyrian Baal or Adonis for Omri to permit His worship to remain. Omri's innovations were of far greater import than those of Jeroboam; or, to speak in the language of the Bible, he acted yet more sinfully than his predecessors. He desired to rob the nation of its God and of its origin; he desired it to forget that it had a special nationality in contradistinction to

that of the idolaters. History has not recorded how these changes were received. His son Ahab (922–901) was destined to continue the work, as though it had been left to him by his father as a bequest. In furtherance of this project he naturally kept up the close connection with Tyre and with the king of Judah.

But the execution of a heritage which imposes the severest attacks on the inner convictions of man is, notwithstanding the best will of the successor, dependent on circumstances or a providence on which the wisest mind cannot reckon. Two kinds of obstacles intervened to prevent the Canaanisation of the Ten Tribes. The one was Ahab's disposition, and the other arose from an unexpected cause which weakened, if it did not entirely destroy, the effect of the terrible blow aimed at religion. In order to accomplish this transformation of the people into a mere appanage of Phœnicia, and the consequent loss of its own identity, the successor of Omri would need a powerful mind, an unbending will, and an unyielding severity to crush all opposition with a strong hand. Ahab was however of an entirely opposite nature—weak, mild, loving peace and comfort, rather disposed to avoid changes and obstacles than to seek or remove them. Had it only rested with him, he would have abandoned his father's system and given himself to such enjoyments as the royal power permitted him, regardless of what the future might bring. Ahab was not even warlike; he permitted the neighbouring kings to treat him in a manner which would have excited the indignation of a king with any feelings of honour, and have roused him to the most determined opposition. But just as he was forced against his desire and inclination to enter into a contest with his ambitious neighbours, he was also compelled to place himself in conflict with the Israelite nation. His father had given him a wife in every way his

opposite, with a strong manly will, who was determined to gain her ends even through severity and cruelty.

Jezebel, the Phœnician princess, whose father had filled the post of priest to Astarte before he obtained the throne, was filled with an enthusiastic eagerness to carry out the plan of Canaanising the people of Israel. Whether from a perverted idea or from political considerations, she desired to amalgamate the Israelite people with her own country and to form but one nation of the Tyrians and Israelites. She continued the work commenced by Omri with energy and mercilessness, and led her weak-minded husband into every kind of oppressive and unrighteous action. Jezebel's gloomy and obstinate character, with her uncontrollable energy, was the cause of a ferment and commotion in the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, which led to disastrous results, but which like a destroying storm performed the beneficent service of clearing the atmosphere. Jezebel's first step was to build a great temple to Baal in the capital of Samaria. In such a temple, there were three altars, images, and monuments, which were dedicated to a sort of holy trinity; to Baal, his consort Astarte, and the god of fire or destruction (Moloch Chammon). For this worship, Jezebel introduced into the country a host of priests and prophets (450 for Baal, and 400 for Astarte), who were supported at the charge of the royal house and who dined at the queen's table. These priests devoted part of their energies to attending to the sacrificial rites in Samaria, whilst others rushed madly through the country, bringing their disorderly habits into the cities and villages. The Phœnician priests or prophets attired themselves in women's apparel, painted their faces and eyes like women, had their arms bare to the shoulder, and carried swords and axes, scourges, castanets, pipes, cymbals and drums. Dancing and

wailing they whirled round in a circle, bowed their heads in turn to the ground and dragged their hair through the mud. They also bit their arms and cut their bodies with swords and knives till the blood ran, and provided an offering for their blood-thirsty goddess. In their madness, temple priestesses (Kedeshôth), who followed their shameful pursuit in honour of Astarte, and for the benefit of the priests, were also most probably not wanting. By means of this troop of priests of Baal and ecstatic followers of Astarte, Jezebel hoped to wean the Israelite people from the God of its fathers and to carry into effect the plan of entirely transforming the national character. At the head of the Phœnician priesthood, there was a high priest, who probably gave instructions and commands as to how they were to proceed in their labours. In the first place, the altars dedicated to God were destroyed and others erected in the Canaanite fashion, with pointed pillars, the symbols of a disgraceful cult, the meaning of which has not been preserved to posterity. The altars in Bethel and Dan were, no doubt, transformed in a similar manner. It was intended that the sacrifice-loving nation, for want of altars of its own, should bring its offerings to the temples of Baal and of Astarte, and thus become accustomed to this mode of worship. How easy it is to force a nation to give up its usages and peculiarities, and to accept those of strangers, if the rulers act with subtlety and force combined! The Israelites in the kingdom of the Ten Tribes had already been demoralised, owing to their half-century's separation from Jerusalem (the centre of intellectual activity), and to the bull-worship which they had long being practising. The cities had acquired a taste for luxury, and a love of dissipation, which the impure worship of Baal and Astarte only served to foster. The

towns doubtless had, for the most part, yielded to the new state of things, or, in any case, had offered no opposition to it. Seven thousand individuals alone remained firm, and would not pay homage to Baal, nor adore him with their lips. A part of the nation, amongst them the villagers, meanwhile wavered in their ideas and actions, and not knowing whether God or Baal was the mightier divinity, they worshipped the one publicly and the other secretly. It was a period of uncertainty and confusion, such as usually precedes an historical crisis. It had to be proved whether the ancient belief in the God of Israel, and the demands of holiness, had taken sufficiently deep root, and had acquired enough vitality and power to conquer opponents, and to eradicate what was foreign. In such a time a striking personality, in whom the better faith is innate, and who is entirely ruled by it, must give the word, and through his firmness, enthusiasm, and heroic self-sacrifice, must convince the waverers, strengthen the weak, incite the indifferent, and thus collect together an army of defenders who will rescue their own free will from the alienation which threatens it. When such an individual is roused by the very opposition of the enemy, and spurred on to action, he becomes a vivifying principle, and brings about a new state of things, a mingling of both the old and the new elements. Such an individual arose during this crisis in the person of the prophet Elijah (920-900).

Whence came this energetic, all-subduing prophet? In which tribe was his cradle? Who was his father? This is not known. He was simply known as Elijahu (shortened into Elijah). He did not come from Gilead, from the remote part of the country, but belonged to those of the inhabitants who were only in part entitled to their possessions, to the Toshabim. He was of a

violent nature, and was guided by no considerations of expediency; he would not have hesitated to offer his life for his creed. He was considered by his successors as the incarnation of moral and religious fervour (*kana*). Like a tempest he made his entry, like a tempest he thundered out his execrations against the weak, woman-led Ahab; like a tempest he rushed away, so that no one could seize him; and in a tempest he disappeared from his scene of action. Elijah alone was imbued solely with the one thought—to preserve the belief in the God of Israel, which was passing away from the minds of the people. To this God he dedicated himself, and in His service he occupied his life. Elijah was outwardly distinguishable by his peculiar dress. In contradistinction to the effeminate, luxurious dress of the worshippers of Baal and Astarte, he wore round his under garments a leather belt, and over it a black cloak made of skin, and he wore his hair long. He touched no wine, and established the institution of Nazirites who were not permitted to drink wine or to shave the hair of the head. In this costume and with these habits he appeared at first in Gilead, and there announced the creed which embraces so much, "Jehovah alone is God." Here, where the Jordan offered a barrier against the swarms of the priests of Baal, and where the fear of Ahab and Jezebel could not strike terror into the heart, he found faithful adherents of the people of Israel. Amongst these Elijah probably found his first auditors and disciples, who were carried away by his enthusiastic manner, and became his helpers.

After a short interval, a body of prophets and their disciples (Bene-Nebiim) had collected together, who were ready to give up their lives for their ancestral tenets. They also followed Elijah's way of living and became Nazirites. The condi-

tions of this newly formed circle were to lead a simple life, not to dwell in cities where luxury and effeminacy ruled, but in village tents; to drink no wine, to till no vineyards, to avoid agriculture generally, but, like the patriarchs and the tribes in earlier times, to live by tending flocks. Jonadab, son of Rechab, who doubtless was one of the followers of Elijah, had first established these rules for himself and his household. He impressed on his descendants the necessity of abstaining from wine, of building no fixed residence, of sowing no seed, and especially of planting no vineyard. Elijah had thus not only momentarily aroused and kindled the faith of a band of defenders for the ancient law, but he had opened for it a new future. He had opposed simplicity and self-restraint to degeneracy and love of pleasure. With his body of disciples he eagerly commenced action against the priests and prophets of Baal. He probably passed rapidly from place to place, called the populace together, and inspired them with his storm-like eloquence, the gist of which turned on the idea that Jehovah alone is God, and Baal and Astarte are only dumb, lifeless idols. He no doubt incited attacks on those priests of Baal who may have encountered him. Jezebel could not endure for long the machinations of the energetic Tishbite, as he interfered with her plans; she sent her soldiers against Elijah's troop, and those who fell into her hands were mercilessly slaughtered. They were the first martyrs for the ancient Israelite law. Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, the priest of Astarte, was the first persecutor of religion. Elijah himself, however, on whom Jezebel was specially anxious to wreak her vengeance, could never be reached, but always escaped from the hands of his pursuers. His zeal had already attained a far-spreading influence. Obadiah, the majordomo of Ahab's palace, was secretly

attached to the ancient law. He, perhaps, had the task of persecuting the disciples of the prophet, and hid one hundred of them in two caves of Mount Carmel, fifty in each cave, and supplied them with bread and water. Obadiah did not stand alone—he had his co-believers who executed his secret commissions. How could Jezebel combat the invisible enemy who found assistants in her own house?

One day, Elijah, though deprived of his followers and knowing Ahab's weak, pliable disposition, ventured into his vicinity in order to reproach him for the misdeeds which he permitted. Ahab had a predilection for building and fortifying towns. It was through him that Jericho, which had been deprived of its walls since the entry of the Israelites, was fortified by Hiel, of Bethel. Ahab also founded a new capital in the beautiful table land of Jezreel, where he was desirous of passing the winter months, for Samaria served only as a summer residence. This new town of Jezreel, which was destined to become the scene of tragic encounters, was built with great splendour. The royal couple had a palace of ivory erected there, and Ahab besides had extensive gardens laid out in Jezreel. Beyond this he coveted a beautiful vineyard near his palace which belonged to Naboth, one of the most respected citizens of Jezreel. Ahab offered him a compensation or exchange in money, but Naboth did not wish to be deprived of the heritage of his fathers. Disappointed at his inability to surround his palace with park-like grounds, Ahab would not even take food. Finding him in this state, Jezebel contemptuously chided him for his childish vexation and his cowardly helplessness, and promised him that he should nevertheless possess the desired vineyard. She sent out letters in the king's name to those of the elders of Israel of whose slavish obedience she was certain, and commanded them to produce two witnesses who would testify to

having heard Naboth reviling the gods and the king. When, therefore, the council of judges had assembled at one of the gates of Jezreel, and Naboth as the eldest placed himself at the head, two worthless men appeared and testified on oath that they had heard Naboth revile the gods and the king. He was condemned to death by the elders, and the sentence was executed not only on him, but also on his sons. The possessions of those who were executed fell by law to the king. Jezebel now triumphantly announced to her husband, "Now thou canst possess Naboth's vineyard in peace, for he is dead." No sooner had Elijah heard of this crime, than he could no longer contain himself. He repaired to Jezreel and met the king just as he was inspecting Naboth's vineyard. Behind him rode two men, of whom one was fated to become the avenger of Naboth. The prophet thundered out to him, "Hast thou murdered and dost now take possession" (1 Kings xxi. 19; 2 Kings ix. 25), and warned him of his imminent destruction: "In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine." This threat had an overwhelming effect on Ahab. He reflected and meekly did penance, but the ruthless Jezebel did not long permit such a change of front, for she ruled her weak-minded husband completely.

Elijah, who had suddenly disappeared, now returned a second time to Ahab and announced that a famine of several years' duration would befall the land. He then departed and resided in the Phœnician town of Zarephath (Sarepta), at the house of a widow, and later in a cave of Mount Carmel. Meanwhile a famine devastated the land, and there was not even fodder for the king's horses. One day Elijah appeared to Obadiah, the mayor of the palace, and said to him, "Go, tell thy master, Elijah is here." On his entrance Ahab said to him, "Is it thou, disturber of Israel?" Then

the prophet replied, "I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house."

As though he alone had the right to give orders, he bade the king command the priests of Baal to assemble on Mount Carmel, where it would be revealed who was the true, and who the false prophet. The occurrence on Mount Carmel, where the contest took place, must have had an extraordinary effect. Ahab summoned all the prophets of Baal to the mountain, whither many of the people repaired, anxious to witness the result of the contest between the prophet and the king, and to see whether the prevailing drought might in consequence come to an end. The hundred prophets who had been hidden and kept in the caves of Carmel by Obadiah were also present. Elijah presided at the assembly, which he addressed, saying (1 Kings xviii. 21): "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." He then ordered the priests of Baal to erect an altar, offer sacrifices, and call on their god for a miracle. The priests did so, and according to their custom they wounded themselves with knives and lances till the blood gushed forth over their bodies. They cried from morning till midday, "O Baal, hear us!" When they at length ceased, covered with shame, Elijah erected an altar of twelve stones, performed his sacrifice, and prayed in a low voice. Then a marvel followed so suddenly that all present fell on their faces and cried, "Jehovah alone is God!" A flash of lightning burnt the sacrifice and everything on the altar, and even the water in the trench was dried up. Elijah determined to avenge himself on the priests of Baal, and commanded the multitude to kill them and throw their bodies into the river Kishon, which flowed hard by. Ahab, though present, was so amazed and terror-stricken that he permitted this act of violence. Jezebel, who

was of sterner character, did not look with equal unconcern on this scene. On receiving information of what had occurred, she threatened Elijah with a similar fate if he should ever fall into her hands. He was therefore obliged to flee in order to save himself. In the desert near Mount Horeb he had a vision, in which it was revealed to him that the kingdom should pass away from the house of Ahab, whose descendants should be utterly destroyed, and that Jehu was to be anointed as king over Israel. Elijah was further instructed to retrace his steps to the wilderness of Damascus, appoint a successor, and retire from the scene of action. At the same time the intemperate zeal which had led him to direct the slaughter of the priests of Baal was severely condemned on Horeb.

During Elijah's long absence there appears to have been a truce between the royal house of Omri and the followers of the Tishbite. Ahab, who had been an eye-witness of the events at Carmel, had probably become more indifferent than he had previously been in his worship of Baal, and as far as lay in his power had put a stop to the persecution of the prophets of the Lord. The latter, on their part, also seem to have become less eager for action. An association of prophets was formed in Jericho and Bethel, in both of which places they were permitted to dwell free from persecution.

One prophet or disciple, however, remained inimical to Ahab — namely, Michaiah, son of Imlah. As often as the king sought out Michaiah to learn his prospects of success on entering on some enterprise, the prophet foretold evil. Ahab, however, did not attempt his life, but merely imprisoned him. The ruler of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes had misfortunes enough to serve him as prophetic warnings. The king of Aram, Benhadad II., became daily more powerful, more pre-

suming, and more eager for conquest. He not only possessed horse-soldiers and chariots, but thirty-two kings, whom he had conquered and enslaved, belonged to his court. With their assistance he attacked Ahab—doubtless in the hope of profiting by the famine and discord which were destroying his kingdom. Ben-hadad subdued whole districts of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, and besieged Samaria (904). In his distress, Ahab sued for peace, but Ben-hadad imposed such hard and disgraceful conditions that Ahab was forced to continue the contest; Ahab was victorious, and the Aramæan king was ready to promise anything in order to secure peace; the former enemies became friends, made a treaty, and ratified it by many oaths, which they no doubt soon forgot again. This hastily-formed alliance was rightly condemned by one of the prophets, who predicted that Ahab had thereby created a fresh source of danger.

Ben-hadad, having happily obtained peace, was by no means anxious to fulfil the conditions and promises of the treaty. He restored the captured town of Naphtali, but the cities on the other boundary, especially the important town of Ramoth-Gilead, he did not desire to cede, and Ahab was too indifferent to press the matter. The longer he delayed the more difficult it became for him to insist on his claim, as Ben-hadad meanwhile was recovering his strength. Perhaps it would have been impossible for Ahab alone to regain possession of Ramoth-Gilead by force of arms. Just at this time he formed an alliance with King Jehoshaphat of Judah (918—905), and together with this king, he ventured to proceed against Ben-hadad. This alliance was a surprising one, seeing that Jehoshaphat detested the idolatrous perversions of Ahab and Jezebel, and could not approve of the forcible introduction of the Baal-worship into Sa-

maria, nor of the cruel persecution of the prophets. Nevertheless, he formed an intimate connection with the house of Omri, and, guided by political reasons, even permitted his son Jehoram to marry Athaliah, the idolatrous daughter of Ahab.

When Jehoshaphat paid his visit to Samaria, in order to strengthen himself by an alliance with its king, Ahab probably solicited his royal guest to aid him in recovering Ramoth-Gilead; and the king of Judah promised the help of his nation and soldiery. Thus, after a long separation, the kings of Israel and Judah fought side by side. After crossing the Jordan with Jehoshaphat, Ahab was mortally wounded by an arrow as he stood on his war-chariot, and he only possessed sufficient consciousness to order his charioteer to drive him out of the turmoil of battle. The soldiers were not informed of the king's condition, and fought until evening. Not until after the king had bled to death did the herald announce "Let each return to his own country and to his own town." The Israelite and Judæan armies then returned across the Jordan, and the Aramæans remained in possession of the mountain city of Ramoth-Gilead. Ahab's corpse was brought to Samaria and interred. But his blood, which had filled the chariot, was washed off into a ditch, and licked up by the dogs.

Ahaziah his son, succeeded Ahab, this being the first occasion on which the kingdom of the Ten Tribes descended in a direct line to a grandson. He reigned only a short time (901-900) and thus but little is known of his character or peculiarities. Notwithstanding all warnings he remained confirmed in the evil ways of his parents. When Ahaziah fell from the window of his room, and had to take to his bed, he sent to Ekron to a celebrated idol Baal-Zebub (Bel-Zebul), to consult the oracle. At this time Elijah had returned from his sojourn

on Mount Horeb, but, in accordance with the commands laid upon him he had remained in seclusion, probably on Mount Carmel. He did not wish to interfere with the course of events, but had chosen as his successor Elisha, son of Shaphat, who lived near the Jordan. The manner of his choice was characteristic of Elijah. While Elisha was ploughing a field with a yoke of oxen, Elijah approached, threw over him his dusky mantle (the distinctive garb of the prophets) and went away. If Elisha were indeed worthy to succeed him, he would understand the sign. Elisha ran after him and begged him to wait while he should take leave of his parents. "Then you can return," said Elijah shortly, and Elisha knew that a faithful prophet of God must leave father and mother and sacrifice the wishes of his heart, and the habits of his life. Without returning to his father's house he followed Elijah at once and served him (as was then customary) by pouring water on his hands. Once only Elijah again took part in public affairs. . He accosted the messenger whom Ahaziah had sent to Baal-Zebub and said to him, "Say to the king who sent thee, Is there no God in Israel, that thou sendest to Ekron in order to consult Baal-Zebub concerning thy illness?" The messenger returned to Samaria and related what he had heard of the extraordinary man. From the description Ahaziah recognised Elijah, and despatched messengers for him. After hesitating for some time, Elijah went fearlessly to Samaria, and announced to Ahaziah that he would not again leave his sick bed. As the king died without leaving any children, he was succeeded by his brother Jehoram (Joram, 899-887). Elijah also disappeared from the scene about the same time. His disciples and followers could not believe that he paid the debt of nature, or that a man of so fiery a nature could fall into dust, and

so they related that he had gone direct to heaven in a storm. His constant follower, Elisha, seeing that his master desired to avoid him, followed the more closely. Elijah visited Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho, followed by Elisha, who did not venture to ask him whither he was going. At length they are said to have crossed the Jordan on dry land, and then Elijah was withdrawn from Elisha's vision by a fiery chariot with fiery horses, which conveyed the prophet to heaven. The untiring activity of Elijah under the most unfavourable circumstances, amidst ceaseless strife and the persecution of the ancient law, surrounded as he was by the idolatry and wickedness of the Baal and Astarte worship, could only be explained as the result of miracles. Elijah's greatest marvel consisted in founding a circle of disciples who strove to keep alive the teachings of the ancient law, and who raised their voices against the perversions of the mighty ones of the land. The prophetic school founded by the prophet lived simply from the work of their hands. After Elijah's disappearance the disciples were without a leader, and Elisha took his place at their head. Elisha at first followed closely in the footsteps of his master, keeping himself apart from all men, and living chiefly on Mount Carmel. In time, however, he accustomed himself to mix with the people, after he had succeeded in rousing an energetic man to destroy the house of Omri, and put an end to the worship of Baal.

Jehoram, the third of the Omris, was not as fanatical in his desire to spread idolatry as his mother Jezebel, but nevertheless Elisha felt so profound an aversion for him that he could not bear to meet him face to face. After his brother's death, Jehoram undertook a war against King Mesa (Mesha) in order to punish him for his secession, and to reduce him to subjection. Together with

his brother-in-law, Jehoshaphat, he determined to proceed through Idumea, whose king was also to supply auxiliary forces, and south of the Dead Sea, towards Moab. By taking this route Jehoram passed Jerusalem, where the heads of the Houses of Israel and Jacob met in a friendly way. But it was the chiefs alone who went hand in hand. Jehoshaphat, who desired to know the result of the war, summoned Elisha, as the successor of Elijah, to appear before him. On seeing Jehoram, the prophet said to him, "Were it not out of consideration for King Jehoshaphat, I would not see thee. Go thou to the prophets of thy father and thy mother." He nevertheless prophesied a favourable result. Mesa, king of Moab, who was awaiting the attack of the allies on the southern border of his kingdom, was overcome by force of numbers, and fled to the mountain fortress of Kir-hareseth (Kir Moab, Kerek). The land of Moab was laid waste, although Mesa was not subjugated. Not long after, on the death of Jehoshaphat, Edom also fell away from Judah. Edom had not acted quite fairly in the combined attack on Moab, but appears to have come to an understanding with Mesa after the withdrawal of the allies. It seemed as if the close friendship and intermarriage with the house of Omri was only destined to bring misfortune on the house of David. Joram (Jehoram) the son of Jehoshaphat, the namesake of his royal brother-in-law of Israel (894-888), was so intimately connected with the royal house of Israel that he introduced their idolatrous practices into his own country. There can be no question but that his wife Athaliah was the cause of this, for she like her mother Jezebel, was fanatically attached to the disgraceful rites connected with the worship of Baal. At length the fate impending over the house of Omri, together with that of David, was to be fulfilled, and

the prophet Elisha held the threads of destiny in his hands. In Damascus a change of dynasty had occurred, where Ben-hadad II., the same king who had warred with Ahab, had been suffocated by his confidential servant, who seized the throne. He was desirous of regaining the conquered portions of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, which had been lost by Ben-hadad. He first directed his attacks against the tribes on the other side of the Jordan. Jehoram of Israel repaired with his army to Ramoth-Gilead, in order to defend that important fortress. The contest for the citadel seems to have been a severe one, and Jehoram was wounded by an arrow. In consequence he went to Jezreel to have his wound attended to, and left one of his captains, named Jehu, as commander of the defence. One day a disciple of the prophets from Elisha came to Jehu, led him away from the council of warriors to a distant room, impressed on him to execute the office of avenger on the house of Omri, and disappeared as suddenly as he had come. When Jehu returned to the council they noticed a change in his manner, and eagerly asked him what the disciple of the prophets had announced to him. Jehu at first did not wish to reply, but at last he disclosed to them, that at Elisha's instance he had been anointed king over the Ten Tribes. The chiefs of the army did him homage, and spread their purple garments on the highest steps of the palace, for a throne, and amid trumpet blasts they shouted, "Long live King Jehu." Having been acknowledged as king by the army, Jehu proceeded without delay to bring the conspiracy to a head. He closed all the roads leading from Ramoth-Gilead to Jezreel, so that the news might not spread. He then led forth a part of the army, crossed the Jordan, and rode in haste to Jezreel, where Jehoram still lay ill from the effects of his wound. The king recognised Jehu from afar, by his rapid riding,

and it seemed to him suspicious that the messenger whom he had sent did not return. Jehoram therefore ordered his chariot that he might see what had brought Jehu to Jezreel in such hot haste. Ahaziah, the king of Judah (who had shortly before this succeeded to the throne of his father Joram, 888), accompanied his uncle to the chariot. They met Jehu in the field where Jezebel had judicially murdered Naboth. There an arrow from Jehu's hand struck Jehoram, who sank down lifeless in his chariot. Jehu had the body cast into the field of Naboth, and reminded his follower Bidkar how they had been witnesses of the prophetic threat which Elijah had uttered against Ahab in that very field, and that *he* had been made the instrument of that doom. Ahaziah fell on the same day. Thus the destruction of the house of Ahab was completed and no one arose in its defence.

Jehu entered Jezreel unmolested; the queen-mother Jezebel, richly decked out, came to the palace window, and called, "How goes it, thou regicide, like unto Zimri?" Jehu commanded the eunuchs of the palace to throw her into the street, and they obeyed. The body of the queen who had done so much harm was trampled down by the horses, and her blood spurted on the wall of the palace and over the horses. Naboth was not, however, fully avenged by the death of the son and the grandmother, there were other sons, grandsons, and relations of Jehoram, about seventy in number, who lived in Samaria, where they were trained and educated by the most respected men. To these men Jehu sent a message that they should appoint a king to occupy the throne. They, however, knew that this message was not to be taken seriously, and preferred to submit to the man who had already killed two kings. Jehu then ordered them to come with the "heads" to

Jezreel, and thereupon they came with the heads of Ahab's descendants. Jehu placed the skulls in two rows on the city gates, and the next morning he explained to the inhabitants of the city that he had only conspired against Jehoram, but that the words of Elijah concerning the House of Ahab had been fulfilled. Jehu combined cunning with determination; all the officers who had brought him his victims he ordered to be executed as murderers. There being now no survivor of the royal house, Jehu took possession of the throne, and the inhabitants of Jezreel paid him homage.

In order to gain the hearts of the nation, he made preparations to exterminate the worship of Baal in Samaria. On his road thither he met with Jonadab, who had adopted the Nazirite mode of life as introduced by Elijah. Together with Jonadab, Jehu went to Samaria, where he assembled the priests of Baal on a certain day, as though he intended joining in their rites. He placed armed men inside and outside the temple of Baal, and went there, accompanied by Jonadab. Hardly had the sacrifice been prepared than all the priests fell as victims. The soldiers killed all those inside the temple, and those who fled were cut down by the men stationed outside. The soldiers then rushed in, burnt the images, destroyed the altar, the columns, and also the temple, and converted the whole into a heap of ruins. Throughout the country Jehu destroyed the hideous idol-worship wherever his hand could reach it, for he professed to be a follower of Elijah, and zealous in the cause of Jehovah. In Jerusalem alone the worship of Baal continued, or rather it was fanatically upheld there by the daughter of Jezebel, who was in every way worthy of her mother.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE HOUSES OF DAVID AND JEHU.

Athaliah's rule—Early years of Joash—Proclamation of Joash by Jehoiada—Athaliah slain—Religious Revival—Elisha—Repairing of the Temple—Death of Jehoiada and of his Son—Invasion of Israel by Hazael—Jehoahaz—Murder of Joash, King of Judah—Jehoash, King of Israel—Defeat of the Aramæans—Amaziah—Conquest of Edom—Death of Elisha—Amaziah defeated by Jehoash—Jeroboam II.—Death of Amaziah.

887—805 B.C.

It is a striking fact that in olden times women, who might have been expected to become priestesses of chastity and morality, displayed a special inclination for the immoral worship of Baal and Astarte. Maachah, the queen-mother in Judah, had established an altar in Jerusalem for the worship of idols. Jezebel had erected one in Samaria, and now Athaliah followed the same course in Jerusalem. This was neither Athaliah's sole nor her greatest sin. The daughter of Jezebel greatly exceeded her mother in cruelty. Jezebel had executed various prophets, besides the obstinate adherents of the ancestral law, or those whom she considered as her enemies. Athaliah, however, shed the blood of her own relations, and did not hesitate to destroy the family of her husband and son. No sooner had she received tidings of the death of her son Ahaziah, than she ordered the soldiers devoted to her cause to execute all the surviving members of the house of David in Jerusalem. The youngest of the princes Joash, who had hardly attained his first year, was only saved from participating in the fate of his brethren by the special intervention of Jeho-

shebah. What did Jezebel's blood-thirsty daughter intend by this massacre? Was her sin dictated by an ambitious scheme for gaining possession of the throne, and for freeing herself from all fear of rivalry? Or did Athaliah, herself a firm believer in the worship of Baal, desire to consolidate and diffuse this worship throughout Jerusalem and Judah; and, in pursuance of that design, did she destroy the remnant of the house of David, so that her own path might be clear? Did she hope to succeed where her mother had failed, and by establishing idolatrous practices in Jerusalem to give fresh impetus to the Phœnician worship?

Whatever motive actuated the worthy daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, Athaliah reduced the Israelite nation to so complete a subservience to her will that no one dared to oppose her evil courses. The nation and priests bowed before her. Even the high priest, Jehoiada, who was connected with the royal house, remained quiescent. In Jerusalem an image of Baal, with pointed pillars and altars, was erected, at the very time that Jehu was destroying those emblems of idolatry in Samaria, and a high priest, named Mattan, had been appointed and installed, with a number of subordinate priests. Did Athaliah leave the temple on Mount Moriah untouched and undesecrated? It appears that she, less consistent in her daring and more timid than later sovereigns, did not venture to introduce an image of Baal into the sanctuary which Solomon had erected. She seems, however, to have interfered with the divine service. The Carians, paid troops employed by Athaliah, and the body of guardians which, from olden times, had attended the king, were placed at the entrance of the Temple, in order to keep out the people. A third of these hireling soldiers were accustomed to guard the Temple on the Sabbath, so as

to prevent any visits there; on the following Sabbath another third relieved them, and thus they took the duty in turn from Sabbath to Sabbath. For six years (887—881) Athaliah regulated the political and religious affairs of the nation, the more noble of the Jewish families probably being of her party. Only the nearest relative of the royal family, the High Priest, Jehoiada, remained true to the ancient teachings and to the House of David. He had married a daughter of King Jehoram of Judah, named Jehoshebah. She was therefore the sister of the king Ahaziah who had been slain by Jehu.

Whilst Athaliah had been ruthlessly killing the last remnants of the house of David, Jehoshebah had rescued the youngest child of her brother from the massacre, and had brought him and his nurse into the chamber in the Temple where the Levites slept. Here she secreted the royal infant for a considerable time, and reared him for his country. Athaliah troubled herself but little as to what was happening in the deserted Temple, and the Aaronites and Levites, who remained faithful to Jehoiada, betrayed nothing. His very youth aroused their interest in the last descendant of the house of David. During the six years in which Athaliah ruled with absolute power in Jerusalem, Jehoiada remained quiet, and entered into friendly relations with the chiefs of the Carians and the guards, gradually revealing the fact that a youthful prince was still in existence, to whom the throne of Judah by right belonged. He found them well inclined towards the royal house, and opposed to the usurper Athaliah. When he had convinced himself of their sympathy with his views, he led them to the Temple, and showed them Joash. He was then seven years of age, and the soldiers probably recognised him, from family features, as the rightful heir to the throne. Jehoiada then demanded that the chiefs should take

the oath of fealty to the child. With their assistance he could hope to effect a revolution, and to restore the royal line. The chiefs could reckon on the blind obedience of their followers, and accordingly a plan of action was decided on, as well as the date for its execution. One Sabbath a division of the Carians then on guard went to their posts, whilst two-thirds occupied the entrance of the Temple. They had all received strict orders to kill anyone who should cross the boundaries of the Temple courts with hostile intentions. As the prince was now secure from all attacks, Jehoiada also permitted the populace to enter the Temple courts. At a thrilling moment, when the Carians and guards stood with drawn swords, and whilst the chiefs held David's weapons of honour, the High Priest led the child Joash from the room in which he had been concealed, put the crown on his head, anointed him as king, and made him mount the pillar-like throne which had been brought into the courts of the Temple for the king's use. The trumpets then sounded, the soldiers shook their weapons till they rang again, the people clapped their hands, and cried "Long live King Joash."

It was only when the noise from the Temple resounded as far as Athaliah's palace that she was roused from the indifference and security in which a belief in the fidelity of her paid troops had caused her to indulge. She hurriedly repaired to the Temple, accompanied by a few attendants. There, to her terror, she beheld a young child with a crown on his head, surrounded by her troops, who were protecting him, and by a mass of people in wild delight. She found herself betrayed, rent her clothes, and cried, "Conspiracy, conspiracy!" Some of her captains immediately seized her, led her by a circuitous path out of the Temple courts to the eastern gates of the palace, and there killed her. Thus the last grandchild of the house

of Omri perished as disgracefully as her mother had done. The close connection of Israel with Tyre had not brought happiness to either kingdom. The mother and daughter, Jezebel and Athaliah, resembled their goddess Astarte — the cause of destruction, death, and ruin. Ahab's daughter does not appear to have had many adherents in Jerusalem—in the hour of death she found no partisans. Her priests of Baal were powerless to help her, for they themselves fell as sacrifices to the nation's anger. Jehoiada, having induced and effected the great revolution, now endeavoured to take precautions against the repetition of similar misfortunes in Jerusalem. He utilised the joyous and enthusiastic sentiments of the youthful king and the nation to remove all traces of the worship of Baal, and to arouse in all minds a faithful dependence on the God of their ancestors. He demanded of the king and the whole assembly a solemn promise to remain henceforth a people of God, to serve Him faithfully, and to worship no idol. The promise, which was proclaimed aloud by the king and the nation, was sealed by a covenant. The inhabitants of Jerusalem poured into the temple of Baal, which had been erected by Athaliah, destroyed the altars, trampled on the images, and all objects which had belonged to the idol-worship. The nation itself undertook to protect its own religion. It was not till after the covenant had been ratified, both by the young king and the nation, that Joash, triumphantly escorted by the guards, the soldiers, and the multitude, was led from the Temple mount into the palace, where he was placed on the throne of his fathers. Jerusalem was in a state of joyful excitement. The adherents of the late queen remained quiet, and did not dare to damp the general enthusiasm.

It is remarkable that in the political and religious revolutions which followed each other in Samaria

and Jerusalem in quick succession, Elisha's helping hand should have been absent. He had commissioned one of his disciples to anoint Jehu as the avenger of the crimes of Omri's house, whilst he himself remained in the background, not even presenting himself at the overthrow of Baal. He does not appear to have been associated with King Jehu, and still less did Elijah's chief disciple take any part in the fall of Athaliah and the destruction of idolatry in Jerusalem. Elisha seems to have occupied himself chiefly with the instruction of prophetic disciples, in order to keep alive the religious ardour which Elijah had kindled. Elisha, however, had not been at first universally recognised as leader. He was reproached for omitting to wear long flowing hair, for it thence appeared that he laid less stress on the Nazirite mode of life. The boys of the prophet schools at Bethel jeered at him and called him "Bald-head." Elisha also differed from his master in associating with his fellowmen, instead of passing his life in solitude as Elijah had done. At the outset, whilst the Omrites were in power, he certainly remained on Mount Carmel, and thence, accompanied by his disciple Gehazi, visited the prophet schools on the Jordanic territories. Later on, he made Samaria his dwelling-place, and was known under the title of the "Prophet of Samaria." Through his friendly intercourse with men he exercised a lasting influence on them, and imbued them with his beliefs. Men of note sought him to obtain his advice, and the people generally visited him on sabbaths and new moons. It was only in the kingdom of Judah and in Jerusalem that Elisha did not appear. Why did he avoid this territory? Or why have no records of his relations with it been preserved? Was he not of the same disposition as the high priest Jehoiada, and had they not both the same end in view? It seems that the

violent prophetic energy of Elijah and Elisha were not much appreciated in Jerusalem. Elijah had built an altar on Carmel, and had there offered up sacrifices; but, though he did so in the name of the same God whose temple was in Jerusalem, his conduct was doubtless not countenanced by the priesthood; it was contrary to the law, and Elijah would hardly have been a welcome guest in Jerusalem.

There, attention had become concentrated on the sanctuary and the law, from the moment when Jehoiada had shown himself its strict guardian. The Temple had suffered injury under Athaliah. Not only had the golden covering of the cedar wood been in part destroyed, but the blocks had been violently pulled out of the walls. It was therefore, an important matter for the young king Joash, at the beginning of his reign, to make good these damages, and Jehoiada impressed on him the necessity of this undertaking. The means, however, were wanting. Whatever treasure might have been in the Temple—the accumulated offerings of former kings or of pious donors—had, without doubt, been transferred by Athaliah to the house of Baal. The king therefore commanded the priests to collect money for effecting the necessary repairs, and bade them engage in this work with as much energy as though it were their own affair. Every Aaronite was to obtain contributions from his acquaintances, and out of the sums thus collected the expenses of repairing the Temple were to be defrayed. Whether it was that the moneys received were insufficient, or that the priests used them for their own purposes, the repairs remained for a long time unattempted. At length the king ordered the high priest Jehoiada (864) to admonish the nation on the subject. A chest with a slit in it was placed in the courtyard of the Temple, and into that chest all whom piety or generosity influenced might place a

free-will offering, each according to his means, or he might give his contribution to the priests, who would convey it to the chest. The gifts were liberal, and proved sufficient to procure materials, and to pay the masons and carpenters. Jehoiada raised the position of high priest—which until then had been inferior to that of the king—to an equality with royal power. Had not the high priest, through his wisdom and energy, saved the kingdom? Would not the last descendant of the house of David have been destroyed if Jehoiada had not rescued him from the bloodthirsty Athaliah? He could justly claim that the high priest should have an important voice in all matters of state. Jehoiada used his influence to inculcate due respect to the law, and to avoid a recurrence of the deplorable period of secession from God. But a strife between the royal power and that of the priests was inevitable, for the former from its very conformation, was dependent on passing events, whilst the latter was based on established laws. During the lifetime of Jehoiada, to whom Joash owed everything, the contest did not break out. Joash may have been prompted by gratitude and respect to submit to the orders of the high priest, and he paid Jehoiada's lifeless body the honour of burial in the royal mausoleum in the city of David.

After Jehoiada's death, however, a contest arose between his son and successor Zechariah and the king, which cost the former his life. The details have not reached us, it has only been stated that at Joash's command some princes of Judah stoned the son of Jehoiada to death in the Temple courts, and that the young high priest, in his dying moments exclaimed, "May God take account of this and avenge it!" Otherwise the total overthrow of the various members of the house of Omri, who had caused so many differences and quarrels in Samaria and Jerusalem, had resulted in the internal

peace of both kingdoms. The present condition was tolerable except that private altars still existed in the kingdom of Judah, and that the God of Israel was still worshipped under the form of a bull in the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. The worship of Baal was, however, banished the kingdom.

From without, both lands were harassed by enemies. Jehu, the bold cavalry general, who had destroyed the house of Omri in Jezreel and Samaria, had not displayed the same ability against his powerful foreign enemies. Hazael, the Aramæan regicide, who was daring in warlike undertakings and eager for conquest, attacked the land of Israel with his troops, took the citadels by storm, burnt the houses, and spared neither children nor women. He also conquered the towns on the opposite side of the Jordan. The entire district of Manasseh, Gad, and Reuben, from the mountains of Bashan to the Arnon, was snatched from the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. The inhabitants were reduced to a state of semi-bondage, and many of them were cruelly crushed under iron ploughshares. Jehu was not in a position to hold his ground against Hazael, perhaps because he had also to meet with opposition from the king of Tyre, whose relation and ally he had slain.

Matters fared still worse under his son Jehoahaz (859-845). The land had been so hard pressed by Hazael and his son Ben-hadad, and the Israelites had been so reduced in strength, that their available forces consisted of but 10,000 infantry, fifty horse-soldiers, and ten war-chariots. From time to time the Aramæans made inroads, carried off booty and captured prisoners, whom they treated as slaves, and sold as such. Jehoahaz appears to have concluded a disgraceful peace with the conqueror, and to have granted his troops free passage through his lands. Thereupon Hazael overran the land of the Philistines with his warriors,

and besieged and conquered the town of Gath. He then intended to advance against Jerusalem, but Joash submitted of his own accord, and bought peace with a sum of money. It is uncertain whether popular discontent was aroused by his cowardice, or whether he had given other causes for disaffection; several nobles of Judah, however, conspired against him, and two of them, Jozachar and Jehozabad, killed him in a house where he chanced to be staying (845-830).

It was Joash, king of Israel, who succeeded in gradually reducing the preponderance of the Aramæan kingdom. Probably this was owing to the fact that the neighbouring kings of the Hittites (who dwelt on the Euphrates), as well as the king of Egypt, envious of the power of Damascus, took up a hostile position towards Ben-hadad III. In order to weaken or destroy the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, he had laid close siege to the capital of Samaria, until all food was consumed, and the distress was so great that the head of an ass was sold for eighty shekels, and a load of dung, for fuel, for five shekels. Few of the war-horses survived, and these were so emaciated that they were incapacitated for service. The famine drove two women to such extremities that they determined to kill and eat their children. The Aramæans, however, unexpectedly raised the siege and hurried away, leaving their tents, horses, asses, valuables and provisions behind them. The king, to whom this discovery was communicated by some half-starved lepers, became once more encouraged. He gave battle to Ben-hadad on three occasions, and defeated him in each conflict. The king of Damascus saw himself compelled to make peace with the king of Israel, and to restore the towns his father Hazael had taken from the territory of the Ten Tribes on the east side of the Jordan.

The weakening of the Damascan-Aramæan king-

dom had a favourable effect on the fortunes of Judah under king Amaziah (843-816). Damascus had accorded its protection to the petty commonwealths of Moab, Ammon, and Edom, which stood in hostile relations to Israel and Judah. Benhadad's humiliation set free Amaziah's hands, and enabled him to reconquer the former possessions of the house of David. The small territory of Edom had freed itself from vassalage about half a century earlier. One of the Edomite kings had erected a new capital on an eminence of Mount Seir, which, situated on chalk and porphyry rocks, lay at a height of 4,000 feet above the sea-level, to which a pathway led up from the valley below. In this mountain city (Petra), fifteen miles south of the Dead Sea, the Idumæans hoped to remain secure from all attacks. Edom said proudly, "Who shall bring me down to the ground?" Amaziah had the courage to attack the Idumæans in their mountain fastnesses. A battle was fought in the salt valley, not far from the Dead Sea, where Amaziah utterly routed the enemy, and the remainder took to flight leaving their fortress at his mercy. Having captured it, he for some unknown reason, changed its name to that of a Judæan city, "Jokthel." Doubtless rich booty was acquired as a result of the successful campaign, for Edom was a country not only rich in flocks, but also in metals. Amaziah was not a little proud of his victory; his pride, however, led to his own ruin, and to the misfortune of his people.

A peaceable understanding existed between Jehu and his successors, and the kingdom of Judah. Although no treaty of peace had been entered into between them, as had formerly been the case under the Omris, they had a common interest in keeping down the adherents of Baal worship.

The kings, Jehoash (Joash) of Israel and Amaziah of Judah, were devoted to the ancient law. Amaziah

can hardly be sufficiently praised for having punished the murderers of his father, whilst contrary to the barbarous custom then obtaining, he spared their sons. Most probably the high priest or some other representative of the Law, had impressed on him that the law of Israel forbids the children to suffer for the sins of their fathers, or fathers for the sins of their children.

Jehoash evinced a deep respect for the prophet Elisha, and followed his counsel in all important matters. When, after more than fifty years of activity (900-840), Elisha lay on his death-bed, the king visited the prophet, wept at his approaching end, and proclaimed him the father and guardian of Israel. After Elisha's death, the king ordered Gehazi (Elisha's constant follower) to recount all the important deeds which the prophet had performed. To the Shunamite woman, in whom the prophet had been interested, the king restored her house and fields (which in her absence, had been seized upon by a stranger), a clear evidence of the strength of Elisha's influence. Elisha had earlier gained a great victory for the Law of God, though in this case the initiative had been taken by another. A respected general, the idolater Naaman, who stood second to the king of Syria, was so powerfully influenced by the prophet, that he voluntarily renounced the impious worship of Baal and Astarte, and acknowledged the God of Israel. He had earth conveyed from the land of Israel to Damascus, in order to erect his private altar on holy ground. Meanwhile, although the desire existed in both kingdoms to free themselves from their enemies, and to remain true to their brethren, internal differences had already taken such deep root that it was impossible for them to avoid war.

After the return of Amaziah from his conquest of the Edomites, he formed the daring conception of proceeding with his army against the kingdom of

the Ten Tribes, and of re-conquering it. As a pretext, he appears to have demanded the daughter of the Israelite king as a bride for his son, intending to regard a refusal as a justification for war. Jehoash satirically replied to his suggestion, "The thorn-bush once said to the cedar of Lebanon, Give thy daughter as a wife to my son; thereon he set free the wild beasts of the Lebanon, who trod down the thorn-bush. Because thou hast conquered Edom, thy heart grows proud. Guard thine honour, and remain at home. Why wouldst thou plunge thyself into misfortune; Judah would fall into the trap with thee." But Amaziah refused to give way, and sent his army to the borders of the kingdom of Israel. Jehoash, encouraged by the victory he had just obtained over the Aramæans, went forth to meet him. A battle was fought on the frontiers at Beth Shemesh, where the men of Judah sustained a considerable loss and fled. Amaziah himself was taken prisoner by the king of Israel.

One can only consider it as an unusual act of leniency that Jehoash did not make a bad use of his brilliant victory, and that he did not even actively follow it up. Could he not dethrone the captive Amaziah, declare the house of David to be extinct, and merge the kingdom of Judah into his own sovereignty? This, however, he did not do, but contented himself with destroying the walls of Jerusalem, together with the town, the palace, and the temple. Jerusalem, which appeared destined to be subjected to recurrent attacks, was, for the first time since its foundation, captured and partly destroyed by an Israelite king. Jehoash magnanimously set the captured monarch at liberty, but demanded hostages. The moderation displayed by Jehoash was no doubt due to the influence of the prophet Elisha or his disciples. After the death of Jehoash (830), Amaziah reigned for

another fifteen years, but was not very successful in his undertakings. The power and extent of the Ephraimite kingdom, on the other hand, increased so rapidly that it seemed as though the times of David were about to return. Jeroboam II. possessed greater military abilities than any of those who had preceded him since the division of the kingdom, and fortune befriended him. He enjoyed a very long life (830-769), during which he was enabled to fight many battles and achieve various conquests. He appears first of all to have turned his arms against the Aramæans. They were the worst enemies of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, and had kept up continuous attacks against it since the time of Ahab. The boundary of the kingdom of Israel extended from the road which led to Hamath, as far as the south-east river, which empties itself into the Red Sea. A prophet of this time, Jonah son of Amittai, from the town of Gath-hepher, had encouraged Jeroboam to make war against the Aramæans. The king also seems to have conquered the district of Moab, and to have annexed it to the kingdom of the Ten Tribes.

Amaziah's efforts, meanwhile, were impeded by the humiliation he had had to undergo. Jerusalem having been deprived of its fortresses, Amaziah could not undertake any war, and had only the poor comfort of being spared by his enemies. The walls could not be repaired, for he had been obliged to leave hostages in the Israelite capital as pledges of his good faith. The nobles and nation in general had ample reason for discontent. Amaziah had injured the country by his presumption. Jerusalem had been robbed of her fortresses, and had been left defenceless against every hostile attack. The discontent was aggravated by the fact that the hostages—the signs of his humiliation, who doubtless belonged to the most

respected families, had to live in banishment. This discontent against king Amaziah culminated in a conspiracy. A violent conflict arose in Jerusalem, the people either siding with the conspirators or taking no part in the contest. Amaziah was helpless, and sought safety in flight. The conspirators, however, followed him to Lachish (about fifteen hours' journey south-west of Jerusalem, where he had taken refuge), and there killed him. He was the third king of the house of David who had fallen by the sword, and the second who had fallen at the hands of conspirators.

After the death of Amaziah, Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah experienced yet greater misfortunes. The princes of Judah, who had dethroned and killed the king, do not appear to have resigned the reins of government which they had seized. Amaziah's only surviving son, Azariah (called also Uzziah), was a child of four or five years of age, and the land was surrounded by enemies. Advantage was taken of this helpless condition of the country, by the Idumæans who had been beaten and disgraced by Amaziah. They commenced an attack on the kingdom of Judah, and Egypt again joined their cause, as it had done in the times of Rehoboam. Sanguinary battles ensued, and the Idumæans took many prisoners. They pressed on to Jerusalem, where the breaches in the walls had not yet been repaired, and carried off numbers of captives. There are no further particulars known of the attack of the Idumæans. Some territories seem to have been separated from Judah, the conquerors being partly from Edom and partly from Egypt. The rude warriors exchanged Judæan boys and girls for wine and prostitutes, and these were resold to the Ionians, who at that time vied with the Phœnicians in the pursuit of slave-trading. The Tyrians, forgetful of their long-standing alliance with the house of David, did not behave in a more friendly manner.

At that time was commenced the dispersion of the Judæans in the distant lands, where the Ionians had sold them as slaves. These Jewish slaves probably brought the first germs of higher morals and culture to the Western nations. Amongst the prisoners were many noble youths and beautiful maidens of Jerusalem, possessed of a high degree of culture, and on account of their surroundings and the eventful history of their nation, they learnt to value their heritage amongst strangers more highly than had been the case whilst they still were dwelling in their native land.

## CHAPTER XII.

### END OF THE HOUSE OF JEHU AND THE TIME OF UZZIAH.

Condition of Judah—The Earthquake and Famine—Uzziah's Rule—Overthrow of Neighbouring Powers—Fortification of Jerusalem—Navigation of the Red Sea—Jeroboam's Prosperity—The Sons of the Prophets—Amos—Prophetic Eloquence—Joel's Prophecies—Hosea Foretells Ultimate Peace—Denunciation of Uzziah—Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem—Last Years of Uzziah—Contest between the King and the High Priest—Uzziah usurps the Priestly Functions—Uzziah's Illness.

805—758 B.C.

AFTER the violent death of Amaziah, the kingdom of Judah or house of Jacob had become so excessively weakened, partly through internal dissensions and partly through foreign warfare, that it was a byeword among the nations. A contemporary prophet called it the "the crumbling house of David," and oftentimes repeated, "Who will reinstate Jacob, seeing that he is so small?" And yet from this weakness and abasement Judah once more roused itself and became elevated to a high degree of power, so that it was enabled to overawe the neighbouring peoples. The internal dissensions had first to be set at rest. The entire nation of Judah rose up against those of the noble families who had committed regicide for the second time, thus creating confusion, and they elected the young prince Azariah, or Uzziah, as their king. This king—who was only seventeen years old, and who like his contemporary, King Jeroboam, enjoyed a long reign—possessed energy, determination and caution, and he was therefore successful in saving the crumbling house of David. His first care was to transport the corpse of his father from Lachish where it had been buried, to Jerusalem where it was interred with

the remains of the other kings of the house of David. Whether Uzziah punished the murderers of his father cannot be ascertained. He then proceeded to heal the wounds of his country, but the task was a difficult one, for he had not only to contend against enemies within the State itself and among the neighbouring nations, but he had also to fight against other unfavourable circumstances. As though the very heavens had conspired against the country, a number of devastating natural calamities burst upon the land, calculated to make the bravest despair, and to render them indifferent to their fate. In the first place, an earthquake occurred in Uzziah's time, which thoroughly startled the inhabitants of Palestine. The people took to flight, shrieking with terror, expecting every moment to be engulfed in an abyss beneath the quivering earth. The phenomena accompanying the earthquake increased their terror. The sun was hidden by a thick fog which suddenly arose, and which wrapped all in darkness, broken only by the lightning flashes which from time to time illuminated the darkness and increased the pervading terror. The moon and stars appeared to have lost their light. The sea roared and thundered, in consequence of the disturbance of its bed, and its deafening sound was heard far and wide. The terror felt at this earthquake was redoubled in the hearts of the people, when it was remembered that a prophet, belonging to the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, had predicted the event two years before. The fulfilment of this threat filled all hearts with fear, and the end of the world seemed at hand. Hardly had this terror subsided than a fresh misfortune broke upon them. The periodical falls of rain were intermitted, the dew no longer revived the fields, a prolonged drought parched the vegetation, the springs became dried up, the intense heat of the sun transformed the meadows and pasture lands into a

desert, man and beast thirsted for refreshment and food, whilst wild beasts wandered languidly about in the forest thickets. The inhabitants of the cities in which the water-supply was quite exhausted set out for the nearest city, hoping to find a supply there, but were unable to satisfy their thirst. The drought extended over wide-spread territories, and also in districts periodically infested by swarms of locusts, to the north-east of Palestine, in the lava districts of Hauran. The locusts in search of nourishment flew across the Jordan to the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, and devoured all that had not been withered by the dry rot. In heavy swarms which obscured the sun, they flew onward, and suddenly the vines, fig and pomegranate trees, the palms and apple trees, were laid bare. These incursions of the locusts continued throughout several years.

In the land of Judah, which had been brought to the verge of destruction by the fate of war, they had reached the highest degree of despair. It seemed as though God had deserted His heritage, people, country and temple, and had given them over to degradation and ruin. Public mourning and pilgrimages were instituted in order to avert the evil. The prophet Joel, the son of Pethuel, exhorted the people publicly in these days of trouble, and greatly contributed to raise their sinking courage. His stirring exhortations were, doubtless, not without effect, more especially as the destruction caused by the locusts began to cease, once more field and garden began to burst into blossom, the brooks and cisterns were filled, and the drought and famine were at an end. The young king immediately utilised the change, in order to chastise the enemies of Judah. He first turned his arms against the Idumæans, who had laid his land waste. He defeated them, because they were possibly no longer aided by the Egyptians, and he reduced Edom to subjection. The town of Elath, on the banks of

the Red Sea, he re-annexed to Judah, and the maritime trade with Arabia and Ophir (India) could thus be renewed. The Maonites or Minites, who occupied a small territory in Idumæa, around the city of Maon (Maan), were subjugated by Uzziah, and compelled to pay tribute. He punished the Philistines, for, during his minority, they had engaged in hostile attacks on the Judæans, and had delivered over the refugees and emigrants to the Idumæans. He conquered the towns of Gath, Ashdod, Jabneh, which lay nearest to the land of Judah, and had their walls razed. He acquired portions of Philistia, united them to his own territory, and erected fortified cities.

He especially devoted himself to the task of fortifying Jerusalem. The northern wall had been destroyed for the space of 400 yards during the prolonged war between his father and Jehoash of Israel. Owing to this circumstance the capital could offer no resistance to an enemy. Uzziah, therefore, had the northern wall rebuilt, or perhaps rendered it more capable of resisting attacks. He probably established friendly relations with Jeroboam II., or he would hardly have been able to commence the fortifications without risking a war. Uzziah had three towers built of 150 yards in height at the leaden gate, at the gate leading to the valley of Hinnom, and at the gate Hananel; on the gate and on the tops of the walls were placed machines (Chishbonoth), by means of which heavy stones were hurled. Uzziah, in fact, displayed great energy in making warlike preparations, the warriors being provided with shields, armour and spears. He also employed cavalry and war-chariots, like those brought from Egypt in Solomon's time.

Uzziah appears chiefly to have taken Solomon's kingdom as his model—the navigation of the Red Sea, from the harbour of Alilat, which Solomon had obtained from the Idumæans, was again re-

newed, and great vessels (ships of Tarshish) were fitted out for the purpose. Altogether, therefore, Uzziah attained a position of predominance over the neighbouring nations.

The kingdom of the Ten Tribes, at the same time, became possessed of great power under Jeroboam II., who was as warlike as Uzziah. In the latter period of his long reign he was engaged in continual warfare with the Syrians. He conquered the capital Damascus, and pressed victoriously to the city of Hamath, which also fell before him. The nationalities which inhabited the district from Lebanon to the Euphrates, and which till then had paid allegiance to the kingdom of Damascus, became tributary to the king of Israel in consequence of these victories. Jeroboam had no longer any rival in his vicinity to contest the supreme power with him. The Phœnicians had become considerably weakened through the internal dissensions in the city of Tyre against King Ethbaal. During Jeroboam's government a civil war appears to have broken out in Tyre, and Phœnicia, which, for a considerable time, had occupied an important position, lost thereby a great part of its influence.

Riches were distributed through Samaria from the booty, and perhaps from the renewed impulse to trade. Not only the king, but even the nobles and the wealthy classes, made a great display, even more so than in Solomon's time. King Jeroboam possessed a winter and summer palace. Houses formed of great blocks of stone, inlaid with ivory and furnished with ivory seats, became very common. In contemplating the increase of power in the two kingdoms, one could almost give way to the illusion that the times of Solomon were still enduring, and that no further change had occurred, except that two kings were ruling instead of one—that no breach had ever taken place, or that the wounds once inflicted had been healed. Jeroboam and

Uzziah appear to have kept the peace together. Israelites were permitted to make pilgrimages unmolested to Beersheba. No doubt some of them also visited the Temple in Jerusalem. It was the last glimmer of a politically happy period. The internal weakness which made itself manifest consequent upon the prosperous times, even more prominently in the kingdom of the Ten Tribes than in the kingdom of Judah, soon put an end to these happy days, and hastened the decadence of the State.

In Bethel and Dan the worship of the bull not only continued, but it assumed yet greater proportions. Images of the bull were also erected in Samaria and in Gilgal. Jeroboam appears to have elevated Bethel to the rank of a capital, and to have erected the chief sanctuary there. A sort of high priest, named Amaziah, ministered there, and appears to have been very jealous of his office. He had fields around Bethel, a rich benefice, unlike the priests of Aaron in Judah. But whether because this backsliding had not sufficed, or because the luxury consequent on the increased wealth of the kingdom had rendered another form of religion a necessity, the hideous worship of Baal and the immoral culture of Astarte were again introduced. It is extraordinary that this idolatry, which had been extirpated with so much energy by Jehu, was again promoted and received fresh encouragement from his grandson. The idolatry thus newly re-introduced brought in its train every species of wickedness and misery. In order to gratify the senses, all thoughts were bent on acquiring riches. The landed proprietors made usury their business, and pursued their debtors with such severity as to make slaves of their impoverished debtors or their children. The wealthy, especially, sold grain at usurious interest. In the years of famine they

opened their granaries, and sold necessaries, for which purpose they used false weights and measures; and when the poor were unable to return what had been lent to them, they heartlessly took their clothing or even their persons in pledge. When these unfortunates uttered their complaint against such injustice in the national assemblies, they found no ear to listen; for the judges were bribed by the evildoers, and were deaf to the voice of justice. The treasures thus extorted were wasted by their owners in daily-repeated acts of excess. The contemporary prophet Amos pictures in gloomy colours the sensual life of the rich and noble Israelites who lived in the chief towns in Jeroboam's time. The wives of the nobles copied the bad examples of their husbands, and urged them to be hard-hearted to the poor, demanding of them, "Bring, only bring us wine, that we may drink."

The Israelite nation could not, however, be so much influenced by the moral turpitude as to allow it to obtain full sway over their morality. Justice and the pure worship of God still had followers who protested more and more strongly against the vices practised by the great, and who, though in humble positions, obtained a hearing. Almost a century had passed since the prophet Elijah, with flowing hair, had declaimed against the sins of Ahab and Jezebel; but the prophetic societies which he had founded still existed, and acted according to his spirit and with energy similar to his own. The young, who are generally more ready to receive ideal impressions, felt a disgust at the increasing moral ruin which came on them, and assembled round the prophetic centres in Bethel, Gilgal and Jericho. The generation which Elisha had reared and taught discarded these external symbols, but pursued the same Nazirite frugal mode of life, and wore long flowing hair; but they did not stop at such outward signs but raised their voices against

the religious errors, against luxury and immorality. Sons became the moral judges of their fathers' customs. Youths gave up drinking wine, whilst the men revelled in the drinking places. The youthful troop of prophets took the place of the warning voice of conscience. In the presence of king and nobles, they preached in the public assemblies against the worship of Baal, against immorality and the heartlessness of the great. Did their numbers shield them from persecution, or were there amongst the ranks of the prophets the sons of great people, against whom it was impossible to proceed with severity? Or was King Jeroboam more patient than the accursed Jezebel, who had slaughtered the prophets' disciples by hundreds, or did their words fall heedlessly on his ears? In any case it is noteworthy that the zealous youths remained unharmed. The revellers only compelled them to drink wine and forbade them to preach; they derided the moral reformers who exposed their wrongdoings, but they did not persecute them.

One of the prophets in the kingdom of the Ten Tribes made use of this freedom of speech; he was the first of a succession of prophets whose great poetical thoughts were revealed to the king, the nobility and the people, in the biting words of truth. Amos did not belong to the prophetic band, he was no prophetic disciple, wore no garment of hair, like Elijah, and probably did not let his hair grow long, but was a simple herdsman and planter of sycamores. Whilst tending his herds, the prophetic spirit came so mightily upon him that he could not refrain from speaking publicly. God spake to him and in him, why then should he not prophesy? The prophetic spirit induced him to repair to Bethel, and there in the temporary capital of King Jeroboam II. he declaimed against the errors and sins of the nobles, and opened their eyes to the

consequences of their evil deeds. It must have created some excitement in Bethel, that a countryman, clad in shepherd's garb, should dare to speak publicly. A high degree of culture must have prevailed in those days in Samaria, when a shepherd was able to make a speech in beautiful rhythmic utterances and be understood by the nation, or that he should be justified in expecting that they would comprehend him. The speeches of Amos and those of his successors combine the eloquence and comprehensibility of prose with the metre and the rhythm of poetry. By metaphors and imagery they raised the standard of poetic diction to a yet greater height. It is therefore difficult to decide whether these utterances should be considered as prose or as poetry. In place of a more suitable description they may be designated beautifully expressed poetic utterances. The orations of Amos were certainly not such as to make one lose sight of his station. He used similes taken from his shepherd life. They showed that, while tending his flocks, he had often listened to the roaring of the lion, and that he must have studied the stars in his night watches. But these peculiarities only lent a special charm to his speeches. Amos came to Bethel before the earthquake had occurred, and he predicted the event in words of prophetic foresight. The earthquake thereupon followed, with all its accompanying terrors, and carried desolation everywhere. It was succeeded by the plagues of drought, sterility of the soil, and the pest of locusts. The kingdom of the Ten Tribes was smitten equally with the kingdom of Judah. Amos, and those who were well inclined, expected therefrom a return to a better state, and a cessation of those evil deeds committed by the heartless persecutors of the poor. But no improvement took place, and Amos inveighed against the impenitent sinners in the severest terms. He scorned the men who ridiculed

his prophetic utterances. He denounced those who gloried in their own power or piety, or in their ancient descent, and who felt themselves to be unassailable. (Amos v. 4–15, vi. 1–8.)

Against such daring speeches, which Amos even employed towards the royal house, the high priest of Bethel felt himself compelled to protest—Amaziah called King Jeroboam's attention to it. He, however, seems, either from indifference or out of respect for the prophet, to have abstained from all proceedings against him. He also appears to have remained unmoved at the prophet's threat, and in no way to have persecuted Amos. It was probably in his name that Amaziah merely said to him, "Go thou, haste to Judah; eat thy bread and prophesy there, but in Bethel thou mayest not remain, for it is the sanctuary of the king, and the capital of the kingdom." Amos did not permit himself to be interrupted in his preaching, but replied, "I am no prophet and no prophetic disciple, but only a shepherd and planter; but the Lord spake unto me, 'Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.'" In the strongest language, he concluded with a threat of punishment. It is noteworthy that he did not protest against the evil deeds in Judah with the same energy, but that he displayed a certain amount of leniency towards the kingdom governed by the house of David. He entered into no particulars concerning the sins which were rife there, but only spoke of them in general terms. He predicted a happy future for the kingdom of Judah, while predicting woe of Israel.

"Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the Lord."

He added a petition to his predictions that new plagues would descend upon the land, in which he said, "Lord God, cease, I beseech thee; by whom shall Jacob rise, for he is small?" (Amos vii. 2, 5.)

The state of weakness which had fallen on Judah since the death of Amaziah, and from which it had not yet recovered in the first years of Uzziah's reign, filled the prophet Amos with compassion. He did not wish to discourage the nation and court still further, but prophesied the future reunion of the tribes under the house of David.

At this time another prophet arose in Jerusalem, named Joel, the son of Pethuel. Most of the prophets were of obscure origin, and returned to obscurity without leaving a trace of their individuality, which was entirely merged in their deeds or works. Joel appeared at a time when all minds had been terrified or rendered almost hopelessly despairing by the repeated attacks of the Idumæans and neighbouring nations, by the successive plagues of the earthquake, drought, and the ravages of the locusts. The inhabitants of Jerusalem and the country became exhausted by long fasts and lamentations; they tore their garments as a sign of mourning, and, collecting with cries and tears in the temple, they endeavoured to avert the Divine anger. The priests were filled with the same terror. Joel, therefore, had a different task to Amos; he could not blame and threaten the people, but he had to raise their spirits and encourage or arouse those who were sunk in despair. He could not openly denounce the sins and errors of the nation, but he merely hinted at them; he only spoke lightly of the drunkards, who now had no wine; he spoke of external atonement, which merely consisted in tearing their garments, but which left the heart untouched, and of the mistaken idea that the Deity could not be appeased without the sacrifice of burnt offerings. Joel had to exert his whole flow of eloquence in order to impress on the nation that God's mercy had not departed from them, that Zion was yet His holy mountain; that He would

not deliver up His people to disgrace; that He was long-suffering and full of mercy, and that their imminent misfortunes might be turned aside without burnt offerings and fasts.

Joel's power of speech was, perhaps, even greater than that of Amos. His highly coloured description of the ravages of the locusts and the accompanying plagues is a stirring picture. The reader feels himself to be an eye-witness. Joel's prophetic eloquence, also, is something between poetry and prose, and is distinguished by its metre, and even a sort of versification. The only speech of his which has been preserved is divided into two halves; in the one half he describes the misfortunes of the nation, blames their perverted ideas, and points out how those ideas must be changed; and in the other he seeks to fill their hearts with a joyous hope for the future. Joel endeavoured to rouse his trembling, wailing and despondent hearers, who had collected on the Temple Mount, from the contemplation of their present troubles, and the narrow boundaries of their present sorrow. He told them that God had sent the plagues as forerunners of a yet more horrible time, of fearful and terrible days which should purify them and lead to a higher order of morality. The sorrows of the present would pass away and be forgotten. Then the great day would come. Joel predicted political changes, when the enslaved Jews of Jerusalem, whom the Philistines and Syrians had sold to the Ionians, and who had been scattered by them far and wide, should again return. The people who had performed acts of cruelty would be severely punished in the valley of Justice (Emek Jehoshaphat), where God pronounces judgment on all nations. Then Egypt and Idumæa should become deserts, for they had shed the innocent blood of the Judæans; but Judah and Jerusalem would be inhabited throughout all generations. Then a higher state

of morality would begin, and all creatures would be filled with the divine spirit of prophecy.

"And it shall come to pass afterwards that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit." (Joel iii. 28.)

The wish which has been attributed to Moses (Numbers xi. 29), will, according to Joel's prophecy, be realized at some future time. Not only Israelites born in the land, but also the strangers who lived as slaves in their families, would have a share in this kingdom of God, and would become worthy of the gift of prophecy, which had already extended beyond the boundaries of nationalities.

Hosea, son of Beeri, the third prophet of Jeroboam and Uzziah's times, spoke yet more decidedly against the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, and in favour of the house of Jacob. Nothing is known of his life and actions; we are not even told the name of the kingdom in which he was born. It is, however, probable that he first appeared in Bethel or Samaria. Whilst Amos was making moral failings the object of his rebuke and scorn, Hosea was declaiming against the religious secession of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, who had returned to the worship of Baal. He did not possess the flow of speech nor the metrical expression of his two contemporaries; his language was usually in the form of prose. It was more diffuse, more eloquent; he introduces metaphorical names, as was customary in the prophetic school from which Hosea appears to have come. He illustrated his meaning in a double metaphor. He represented the introduction of the worship of Baal amongst the Ten Tribes and their subsequent return to God, as the conduct of a faithless wife who afterwards returns to the path of duty. To this Hosea superadded an introduction. In a prophetic vision he receives the command

to take home the faithless wife, and to rear her children. He explains how he follows the command, and brings home a woman of evil repute, who bears him three children—a son, Jezreel, a daughter, whom he called "Unloved" (Lo-Ruchamah), and a second son, named "Not of My Nation" (Lo-Ammi). The prophet explained these metaphorical names; thus, Jezreel meant two things—in the first place, that God would visit on the house of Jehu the blood that their forefathers had shed in Jezreel; and further Jezreel denoted that God would destroy the armies of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel. The name of the daughter meant, that God would no longer care for the house of Israel; and, lastly, the name of the second son denoted that the God of Israel had deserted the nation, and would no longer be its God. After the introduction and explanation, the prophet Hosea began his address. He describes the entire extent of the faithlessness of the house of Israel in the metaphor of an adultress who pursues her lover (Baal), in the belief that riches and wealth should come from him, forgetting that God had endowed her with the corn and wine, the silver and gold, which she was wasting on the idol Baal; God would therefore deprive her of everything, and not leave her even sufficient clothing to cover her body. In her need she would be overcome by repentance, and say, "I will return to my first love, for then all will go well with me." The prophet then pictures the return of the faithless wife, who would be deeply impressed with a knowledge of her past wickedness, and, turning to her husband, would call unto him, "My husband and my lord," for the name "master" (Baal) would have become hateful to her. (Hosea ii.)

The nation, depicted as the repentant wife, would again be pardoned by God, as in the days of the exodus from Egypt; from the desert she would be

led back to her fatherland, and would once more sing her psalms of praise as in the time of her youth, and in the days when she first left Egypt. The union that would again subsist between her God and her would shield her from the wild beasts, and war would cease. Jezreel, the "Unloved," would be once more loved, and "Not of My Nation" would again become God's people, and would acknowledge their God.

If Hosea unrolled a glowing picture of the future of the Ten Tribes, he did not desire to mislead his hearers by leaving them in the error that such a time was close at hand. In a second oration, which was probably not fully preserved, he predicts that many unhappy days would intervene before the return of the Ten Tribes could take place and before their atonement should be completed. This speech he also introduced in the shape of a vision. God had commanded him again to take into his house a faithless but much-loved wife. She was not to bear him children, but he was to keep her apart, and not permit her to mix with men. This vision denoted that, though God loved the Israelite nation, they had yet, forgetting all ties of honour and duty, given themselves up to the worship of the images of Astarte and Chammon. And it denoted further, that the sons of Israel would remain long without a king or a prince, without an altar or columns, without an ephod or the house-gods or mummies (Teraphim); till at last, purified by severe trials, they should return to God in the latter days. Hosea prophesied the total destruction of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. On the other hand, he laid even more stress than contemporary prophets on the endurance of the house of David and of the kingdom of Judah.

Hosea nevertheless blamed Uzziah for the war-like preparations on which he laid so much importance. National sin in the one kingdom and

misfortunes in the other brought the precious ore of prophetic eloquence from the hidden depths, and enabled it to obtain a wide-reaching influence. The sins of Ahab and Jezebel aroused Elijah, and the evil deeds of Jeroboam II. and his nobles drew Amos away from his flocks, and brought Hosea out of his quiet life into publicity. They were enabled to disseminate in an attractive form the thoughts which filled their hearts and minds. Their fears and hopes, their thoughts and convictions, became thenceforth the common property of a great circle, and inspired others with the same soul-stirring and ennobling ideas. The attentive disciples of the prophet imprinted his teachings on their memories or recorded them in writing. They formed the first pages of prophetic literature, which, later on, were to rouse up the hardened nations of the earth. Whilst Amos, Hosea and Joel held forth in prophetic visions the prospect of a better future, though only in dim outlines, they insured the future of the nation from which they sprung, for a nation which looks confidently forward to a happy future is safe against destruction, and does not permit itself to be crushed by the most terrible trials in the present. One of these prophets—Joel or Hosea, drew a picture of the future, to which the noblest minds have clung, and to which they still hold fast. (Isaiah ii. 2-4.)

This grand picture of everlasting peace, founded on the teachings of Israel, which depicted the transformation of instruments of war into implements of agricultural labour, is far superior to all such works of art as merely attract the eye and mind of man. The Israelite prophets predicted that moral improvement and eternal peace, the outcome of the Law, would be taught in Zion. The hostile tone which the two prophets assumed towards the house of Jehu was not without effect. Just as Elisha and his disciples raised up an enemy

against the Omris, so the energy of Amos and Hosea provoked attempts against the last of the Jehus.

Jeroboam II. died peacefully at an advanced age, after a long and happy reign, but no sooner had his son Zechariah ascended the throne (769), than a conspiracy was formed against him. The ringleader was Shallum, son of Jabesh, and he killed the fourth descendant of Jehu in Ibleam. Zechariah reigned only a few months. His murderer destroyed the royal house of Jeroboam II., following the example set by Jehu in dealing with the house of Ahab. Even the women and children were slain. Shallum then went to Samaria, in order to take possession of the throne and kingdom, but he could only maintain his position for the space of one month. For a conspiracy was also instituted against him by Menahem, the son of Gadi, a former inhabitant of the capital Tirzah. He proceeded towards Samaria, and was admitted into the capital without difficulty. He killed Shallum (768), but no doubt met with greater opposition than he expected. Even though the capital opened its gates to him, other towns did not immediately submit. The town of Tiphsah (Tapuach) shut its doors against him. Menahem, however, was more daring than his predecessor, and united with his courage the utmost hardness of heart. He laid siege to the rebellious city, and, having compelled it to surrender, he thereupon executed the entire population—men, women, and children, not even sparing pregnant women. After this massacre he proceeded to Samaria, where he seized upon the throne of the Jehus. A chief who displayed cruelty such as this could hardly expect to win all hearts. Menahem appears to have abolished the worship of Baal. The worship of the bull, however, was still continued. During this reign a powerful king-

dom became concerned in the history of the Ten Tribes, and was destined to put an end to the house of Israel.

The better portion of that house, disgusted by the evil doings described by the prophets, turned to the house of Judah, whence they were, however, repulsed by equally reprehensible conditions. Internal dissensions broke out under Uzziah, which, it appears, were purposely ignored. Uzziah's aim seems to have been wholly and solely directed to military affairs—the acquisition of bows, shields, and spears. Mental improvement had no interest for him, it was even distasteful. Uzziah gave offence to the Aaronites more especially, and the peaceful understanding which had existed between royalty and the priesthood since the time of his grandfather Joash, became shaken when the king endeavoured to extend his sway over the Temple. He was opposed by the high priests, whose power was equal to that of the descendants of David. It is certain that in the latter years of Uzziah's government disputes broke out between him and the high priest Azariah, similar to those between King Joash and Zechariah. In order to deprive the high priest of his important office, Uzziah took a bold step. He entered the sanctuary and began to light the incense-burner on the golden altar, an act which was the especial privilege and duty of the high priest. The Aaronites felt the greatest anger at this act. The high priest, Azariah, who together with eighty priests had followed the king into the sanctuary, angrily reproved him, saying, "It is not for thee, O Uzziah, to bring incense, but only for the anointed priest of Aaron's family. Leave the sanctuary: thou art guilty of desecration, and it cannot bring thee honour."

What followed is not known. Uzziah in the latter years of his reign was attacked by an in-

curable skin disease, and had to be kept in a special house for the rest of his days. The nation considered this illness as a divine punishment for his sins, inflicted because he had dared to perform the rites of the priesthood.

In this contest between the sacerdotal and royal houses the former was triumphant, for it possessed the Law as its weapon, and this was of greater avail than the sword, but another mighty power was now about to join in the contest.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE DOWNFALL OF THE KINGDOM OF THE TEN TRIBES; THE HOUSE OF DAVID, AND THE INTERVENTION OF THE ASSYRIANS.

King Menahem—The Babylonians and the Assyrians—Pekah—Jotham's reign—Isaiah of Jerusalem—His style and influence—His first public address—Later speeches—Their immediate and permanent effect—His disciples—Their characteristics—Zechariah—His prophecies.

758—740 B.C.

WHILE Uzziah, compelled by his disease, was passing his last years in solitude, his youthful son Jotham took the management of affairs. In the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, Menahem, the cruel usurper (768-758), was probably ruling with an iron hand. Both kingdoms continued in the same grooves, unconscious of the fact that in the distant horizon storm-laden clouds were gathering which would discharge themselves on them with fearful effect. From Assyria and the districts of the Euphrates and Tigris the people of both kingdoms were about to be subjected to heavy trials.

No sooner had the Assyrians extended their territory in the north, east and west, than they turned their attention to the south. They endeavoured, in the first place, to gain possession of the sea-coast of the Phœnicians, and thus to obtain control over the wealth of that commercial nation. They next hoped to conquer Egypt, where the wealth and renown of the people filled them with a desire for victory. For the first time an Assyrian army, under the command of King Pul, appeared on Israelite ground. King Menahem did not dare to oppose his forces to this mighty host. The internal confusion must have greatly crippled his powers, and opposi-

tion was therefore out of the question. The curse of the regicide oppressed him with its consequences even more heavily than it affected his nation. Menahem was hated by his people, for the cruel means by which he had obtained possession of the throne was ever fresh in their memories. The friends of the murdered king kept alive this hostile feeling. When Pul arrived on Israelite ground it appears that the enemies of Menahem suggested to the invader the advisability of dethroning the king. Menahem, meanwhile, betook himself to the Assyrian conqueror, and promised him a large sum of money on condition that his government was left secure. Pul accepted the money and retired from the country, carrying his booty and prisoners with him. Menahem did not draw the money from his own treasury, but forced wealthy individuals to provide it. Each one had to pay what was at that time a heavy sum, viz., 50 shekels.

Thus came the beginning of the end, and the fate which Amos had clearly predicted half a century before, appeared to be in process of realization. He had said that a distant nation should carry off the Israelites to a foreign land beyond Damascus. The Israelites were in fact carried off to the region of the Tigris, or to one of the divisions of the great Assyrian kingdom. The kingdom of the Ten Tribes, however, seemed to all appearance unhurt. It numbered 60,000 wealthy men, who could pay large sums of tribute money. Menahem still had his cavalry—his sinews of war—and the fortresses on which he thought he could still place dependence. But, without his knowledge, old age (as one of the prophets had rightly designated the national decadence) had now crept over the people. Menahem probably introduced the Assyrian mode of worship. One characteristic feature of this consisted in the adoration of Mylitta, the goddess of love, and the duties of her creed included the

renunciation of virtue and the adoption of an immoral life. This innovation, added to the already existing internal dissensions, gradually sapped the foundations of the State. When the cruel Menahem died, and his son Pekahiah succeeded (757), the latter was only able to retain the throne for two years. His own charioteer, Pekah, the son of Remaliah, headed a conspiracy against him, and killed him in his palace in Samaria (756), and placed himself on the vacant throne. The mode of regicide, the seventh which had occurred since the commencement of the kingdom of Ten Tribes, is wrapped in darkness; it seems, however, that Pekah had to remove two other competitors before he could himself ascend the throne of Samaria.

The son of Remaliah, the last king but one in Israel (755-736), was an inconsiderate and ruthless man who oppressed the country to an even greater extent than his predecessors. He was characterised as a faithless shepherd, "who deserted his flock, who sought not the missing ones, who healed not the wounded, who tended not the sick, and who also devoured the flesh of the healthy." In order to protect himself against the attacks of the Assyrians he entered into an alliance which the neighbouring princes had established in order to resist the encroachments of the Assyrians. The plan probably originated in Damascus which now once more owned a king, named Rezin, and which would be the first to suffer from the Assyrian conqueror. Judah was also drawn in. Uzziah, the king, having died in his house of skin disease, his son Jotham, who had ruled for many years as protector, assumed the title of King (754-740). Jotham had no very striking qualities. He was neither ambitious nor statesmanlike, but he kept in the grooves in which his father had moved. He seems to have been at peace within his own realm; there is at least no account of any dispute between him and the high-

priest. Abroad, the conditions remained the same as under Uzziah. He continued to maintain the squadrons of cavalry, the war chariots, and the ships of Tarshish which navigated the Red Sea, and was thereby enabled to acquire fresh riches and glory. Jotham also strengthened the fortifications of Jerusalem. He maintained friendly relations with the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, or rather with their king, Pekah, and there seems to have been a very intimate connection between the two sovereigns. In Judah itself, however, the ambitious nobility exerted an injurious influence on the morals of the people, the evil being especially strong in the capital. Through circumstances which cannot now be traced, some of the noble families had attained a height of power that exalted them almost to equality with the king. The princes of Judah led the councils, decided the most important affairs of State, usurped the powers of justice, and so thoroughly obscured the dignity of the house of David that but a mere shadow of its authority remained. In this house there existed a princely family, from which the superintendent of the palace seems always to have been chosen. This high official oppressed the court and attendants to such an extent, and attained to such power and influence, that he was considered the actual regent. He was known by the title of Manager of the Court (Sochen).

Other evils arose out of these abuses. The princes of Judah sought to enrich themselves by all possible means, and to obtain possession of the pasture lands, vineyards, and meadows of the country people, and to extend their territories. Things seem to have reached such a pitch that the nobles and elders had the erections on their vast possessions built by slaves or by the poor whom they had themselves reduced to slavery. They did not hesitate to make serfs of the children of

those poor who were unable to pay their debts, and they had to tread the mill. With this cruel injustice another sin was combined. The princes of Judah entered into connections with the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. Here, and especially in the capital Samaria, the greatest excesses were to some extent sanctified, and formed a constituent part of the divine worship. Here there were Temple-priestesses in numbers. In the kingdom of the Ten Tribes sacrifices were offered on the summits of the mountains and hills, whilst vice held its ground in the shade of the oaks and terebinths. So great had been its progress, that daughters did not remain untainted, but followed the example of their fathers. Wine and depravity had so vitiated the minds of the great, that they only cared for enjoyment, and desired to pass their lives in a continuous course of pleasure. They arose early in the morning and had recourse to the wine-cup, and till late at night they inflamed their blood with wine. At such entertainments they had the noisy music of flutes, trumpets, harps, and lutes. This was an innocent amusement compared to their other pleasures, but the severe morality enjoined by the Sinaitic Law was hostile to dissipation. As long as this Law held sway the love of pleasure could not be fully gratified. At this time the custom arose of consulting blocks of wood and sticks as oracles concerning the future. From these the nobles of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, "the drunkards of Ephraim," learnt how to follow their evil desires. Divine service in the Temple of Jerusalem was, it is true, officially recognized: but this did not prevent the princes from following their own mode of worship privately. The brotherly fusion of Israel and Judah chiefly resulted in making idolatry, dissipation, intoxication, pride, and scorn of what was right, the common property of both kingdoms.

However, depraved as the Israelite and Judæan nobles had become, they yet abstained from legalising their depravity, and thus they avoided its universal promulgation. Amongst the Israelites immorality never went so far as to make injustice appear as right. There were men who loudly declaimed against the mockery of justice, and the oppression of the poor; men who defended justice and morality as the only right course; men who supported the weak against the mighty. Just at this period of degradation, while Jotham ruled in Judah and Pekah in Israel, several God-inspired men arose, who spoke with words of fire against the vices of the nobility. This was the last generation of great prophets who succeeded Amos, Joel, and Hosea, as these had followed Elijah and Elisha.

The most important amongst them was Isaiah, son of Amoz, from Jerusalem. Together with his contemporary prophets, Zechariah, Hosea, and Micah, he shared the courage which calls vice and crime by their right names, and which mercilessly brands the guilty. He surpassed all his predecessors in depth of thought, beauty of rhythm, exaltation of poetical expression, in the accuracy of his similes, and in the clearness of his prophetic vision. Isaiah's eloquence combined simplicity with beauty of speech, with directness and biting irony, with an inspiring flow of language. But little is known of Isaiah's mode of life. His wife was also gifted with prophetic insight. He wore the usual prophet's dress—a garment of goatskin. Like Elijah, he considered his prophetic task as the labour of his life. His energies were entirely directed to exposing wickedness, to warning and exhorting the nation, and to holding before it the ideal of a future, to attain which it must strive with heart and soul. He gave his sons symbolical names, indicative of the events about to occur

and which might serve as a sign and an example. For more than forty years (755-710) he fulfilled his prophetic office with untiring and unshaken courage. On hopeless occasions, when all—great and small, kings and princes—despaired, his confidence never deserted him, but aroused the hope and courage of his people.

Isaiah first appeared in the year of King Uzziah's death (755), when he was about thirty-three years of age. He announced to the nation (probably on Mount Zion) the vision with which he had been visited, and described how he had been chosen as a prophet. Isaiah's first speech was a short, simple communication of the vision revealed to him, the deep meaning of which could not be misunderstood. He related that he had seen in a dream Jehovah Zebaoth on a high and exalted throne, surrounded by the winged seraphim. One seraph after another cried, "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah Zebaoth" with such thrilling voices that the very supports of the Temple trembled:

"Then I said, Woe is me, for I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.

"Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs off the altar, and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged."

In his first poem Isaiah only touched lightly on the sins of the nobles, but hinted that they were deaf to purer convictions. In another poem, which has been preserved, he went into greater detail, and more especially held up a mirror to the princes of Judah wherein they might see their folly and sin. He described the ideal destiny of the people of Israel and of the Law, and of the Temple which had been placed in their charge, and he chose for his purpose the undying words of an older prophet:—

"For from Zion shall the law go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

In this speech Isaiah touched the root of the evil which had produced a state of religious demoralisation and most heartless injustice. It had arisen in a thirst for pleasure and sensuality, and was kept alive by the women, to satisfy whom the men were continually urged to commit depredations and to pillage and enslave their weaker neighbours. With surprising force the prophet describes the love of display of the daughters of Zion. In order to leave this sad picture, the speaker continues in a cheery, hope-inspiring strain:—

"The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud of smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night. For upon all the glory shall be a defence. There shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from ruin."

It may be questioned whether this masterly speech, perfect though it was in subject and form, exercised any immediate influence. It led to no lasting improvement, for Isaiah and his contemporary prophets had often to preach against the same errors and the same sins. The nobles were not to be so easily improved; they sneered at the threatening future with a scornful smile. But Isaiah's powerful words were not spoken quite in vain; they influenced people to whom they were not especially addressed; they were heard in distant lands and distant nations in days then far off. Isaiah did not content himself with inveighing against sin; he depicted a moral ideal, through the realisation of which men would find happiness and contentment. The king should rule with justice, and should see that the princes also govern according to right. The king should not judge by appearances, and should not listen to all that he hears. Isaiah treated with great contempt the hypocrisy which praises God with the

lips, whilst the heart is dumb. He scorned still more the offering of sacrifices by unprincipled and wicked men. (Isaiah xxix. 13.)

Isaiah appears to have used other means besides those of soul-stirring sermons, in order to heal the moral and religious ills of Judah. He adopted the measures of Elijah and Samuel, and assembled around himself those who shared his opinions, or he instructed young men who were imbued with his spirit. He selected those who had suffered from the injustice and tyranny of the nobles of Judah; he drew the discontented and sensitive into his circle; they became at once his disciples and his children. He did not instil into them hasty and ungovernable zeal, but he impressed on them the virtues of gentleness, patience, and entire resignation to God. The members of the circle which he had collected around him were called the "gentle ones," or "the sufferers of the land" (Anve-Arez, Anavim). They were mostly of poor family, or they had become impoverished through the depredations of the nobles. They either called themselves or were called by others the "poor" (Dallim, Ebionim). From Isaiah they learnt to refrain from complaints against their sorrow and pain, and to trust in God and submit to His will. These "gentle ones" formed a special community; they were considered the kernel and support of the nation by the prophet Isaiah and his successors, and to them all hearts were turned. They were expected to improve and purify the entire people and to serve as a pattern to the whole nation. The light shed by these great prophets cast beneficent rays around; germs of thought, which lay hidden in the teachings of Sinai, came to light, and the mental rule of the nation became established through them. Isaiah, therefore, became an important feature in the national history of the people of Israel, as Samuel and, in a lesser degree, Elijah had been before him.

Isaiah's prophetic labours were not confined to his nation and country; they extended beyond the boundaries to the two great states of Egypt and Assyria, which, like great cloud-masses, were casting lightning-flashes over Israel and Judah.

Another prophet, named Zechariah, son of Berechiah, rose up against the continued perversions of the times. This prophet could not compete with the fiery and graceful eloquence of his contemporary, Isaiah. He is wanting in power and sequence; he does not let thought follow thought, but he passes without any connection from one subject to another. The language of Zechariah is poetically beautiful, and he endeavours to carry out the metrical rules; but he does not keep to the rhythmical nor usual forms of poetry. He frequently confuses the metaphor of a shepherd as applied to the king with that of a shepherd as applied to the nation. He certainly unrolls the picture of a glorious future in order to relieve the dispiriting present. He shows how the neighbouring nations, who were hostile to Israel—the Aramæans, Tyrians, and even the Philistines—would acknowledge the God of Israel and would be accepted as His children, when they should lay aside their evil deeds and their false pride.

The prophet Zechariah further announced that God would make peace between the house of Judah and the house of Ephraim, and that He would bring back their exiles. Even though He had dispersed them amongst the nations, they would still remain true in their banishment, and return to Him with their children. The pride of Assyria would be humbled; the Egyptian plague be stayed. This declaration closed with the prospect that of the entire nation only a third should survive. But even this remnant would only be sufficiently purified by trials to render it the people of God. Zechariah made special allusions to Pekah king of Israel as the

"false shepherd," who had treated his flock more ruthlessly than his predecessors. He relates how God appointed a shepherd over His people, and gave him two staves—one named "mercy," and the other "peace." But the nation had renounced God, and therefore it had been renounced by God, who broke the staff of mercy, and set aside the covenant He had made with all the tribes of Israel; and now He had broken the second staff, the "staff of friendship" between the tribes of Israel and Judah. God had placed over them a foolish shepherd, who did not seek the wandering lambs—who did not heal the wounded, and who devoured the flesh of the healthy ones. The nation, it is true, deserved no better guide; nevertheless, the shepherd who had thus deserted his flock would surely incur the chastisement of God.

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# CHAPTER XIV.

## THE END OF THE KINGDOM OF THE TEN TRIBES, AND THE HOUSE OF DAVID.

The Reign of Ahaz—His Character—Alliance between Pekah and Rezin—Tiglath-Pileser and Assyria—Ahaz seeks Assyrian Aid—Isaiah's Opposition—Defeat of Pekah and Rezin—Introduction of Assyrian Worship—Human Sacrifices—The Second Micah—Samaria after Pekah's Death—Assyria and Egypt—Hoshea—Samaria taken by Shalmaneser—The Exile—Hezekiah—His Early Measures—His Weakness of Character—Isaiah's Efforts to Restrain Hezekiah from War with Assyria—Arrangements for the Defence—Change of Policy—Isaiah Predicts the Deliverance—Micah—Rabshakeh's Embassy—Hezekiah's Defiance—His Illness and Recovery—The Destruction of Sennacherib's Army—Merodach-baladan—Hezekiah's Rule—The Psalmists—Death of Hezekiah.

739—696 B.C.

THE bond of union which connected Judah and Israel, under Uzziah and Jotham, was snapped asunder on the death of the latter, and dissensions filled all minds. The cause of this can only be conjectured. The new king of Judah, Ahaz (739-725), who ascended the throne in his twenty-fifth year, was a weakling, with confused ideas, and by no means equal to his dangerous position. Important political complications occurred during his reign, in the threads of which he became hopelessly entangled. Shortly after his accession to the throne he had to decide a question of great import, namely, whether he would join the alliance formed by Pekah of Israel, Rezin king of Damascus, and other less important confederates. This alliance was formed to meet a twofold danger. On the one side was Egypt, which had become powerful under King Sabako, and on the other side Assyria, which was also governed by a king ambitious of

conquest. He had with a strong hand reduced to subjection refractory tributary states.

After the death of King Pul, the last descendant of the royal house of the Derketades, an energetic king ascended the throne of Assyria, who not only re-united the crumbling kingdom, but gave it still greater power and extent; this was Tiglath-Pileser. After capturing and destroying the fortresses of Mesopotamia, he turned towards the countries westwards of the Euphrates and in the neighbourhood of Lebanon. He wished to enslave the kingdoms which Pul had subjugated, and make them dependencies of Assyria. In order to oppose the Assyrian conqueror, Rezin, king of Aram-Damascus, formed an offensive and defensive alliance with Pekah, and was desirous of securing the co-operation of Ahaz. The latter, however, refused to join them, and the two kings, it appears, then sought to enter into a treaty with the Philistines and the other neighbouring nations, for the purpose of attacking Judah.

This plan occasioned great alarm in the house of David, and Ahaz then had recourse to a fatal step. He sent secret messengers to the Assyrian king, Tiglath-Pileser, and asked him for help against his enemies. At the same time he offered himself as a vassal, and his land as an Assyrian province. This step might bring him momentary help, but could only endanger the whole future.

Isaiah, with his prophetic insight, looked far into the future, and warned the king against acting rashly. He went to Ahaz, to the spot near the lake, where he was continuing his work of fortification. Isaiah was accompanied by his son Shear Jashub, from whose heart he wished to eradicate fear. In clear and simple yet eloquent language, he revealed to him the future. He then pointed out the evils likely to result from an alliance with the Assyrian king. From the present, Isaiah's prophetic vision

turned to the distant future. He sees the land overrun by the Assyrian army, turned into a field of thorns and thistles; especially he foretells the destruction of the mountains which were then covered with noble vineyards, but which had been the scene of so much drunkenness and dissipation. But the pasture lands were to remain, and every man would have to content himself with a young bull and two sheep; but the land would once more flow with milk and honey, sufficient for the needs of the remnant of the nation (Shear-Jashub).

Isaiah then reverted to the present time. He related how instructions had come to him to write in large letters in the vernacular, "Quick booty, hasty plunder" (Maher Shalal, Chash Baz). He was to take two—the priest Uriah and the prophet Zechariah, the son of Berachiah—as witnesses. Further, when his wife, the prophetess, had borne to him a son, he had, in prophetic inspiration, bestowed on him the significant name of Maher-Shalal-Chash-Baz. This should verify the foreboding, "Before the new-born son of the prophet should say father and mother, the land of Damascus and the possessions of Samaria would be carried off by the king of Assyria." Isaiah then declaimed against the traitorous party which was secretly allied with the enemy. Ahaz, however, remained deaf to all these predictions. He had more confidence in Tiglath-Pileser than in the God of Israel, and thus his doom was sealed. No sooner did the news reach the Assyrian king that various nations and princes had formed a treaty against him, than he invaded their lands. Rezin consequently had to raise the siege of Jerusalem, and hurry to the defence of his country. Pekah also had to think of his own safety, and Jerusalem was momentarily safe from both of the hostile kings.

The latter could no longer avert the consequences of the steps they had taken. Tiglath-Pileser first besieged Damascus, captured it, took Rezin prisoner, and slew him. From Damascus the victor proceeded against the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, conquered the fastnesses of the mountain lands and of the maritime and Jordanic districts. Pekah does not appear even to have attempted any opposition, but to have submitted without resistance. Tiglath-Pileser therefore permitted him to live, but he carried off the inhabitants of the northern cities and those of the opposite coast as prisoners (738). He distributed them in various districts of the great Assyrian empire. Thus the kingdom of Israel was deprived of half its land and half its inhabitants. Its boundary on the north barely reached Mount Tabor, and this remnant became an appendage to the Assyrian kingdom. A yearly tribute was imposed, and gifts of allegiance were sent to the king. It is certain that great discontent was felt against Pekah, who had incurred these misfortunes through his cowardice; he was the foolish shepherd who had deserted his flock. This discontent ended in a conspiracy against him. Hoshea, the son of Elah, headed the plot, and killed Pekah (736), after he had ruled for two decades, and brought down misfortunes on his country.

An important change also occurred at this period in the kingdom of Judah. Ahaz submissively became the vassal of the king of Assyria, and had, therefore, to pay homage to Tiglath-Pileser. Instead of feeling humiliated, he was seized with admiration for the Assyrian customs, and determined to imitate them in his own country. He also introduced the worship of the sun and stars in Jerusalem. The picture of the sun-god was probably erected at the the entrance of the Temple, and horses and chariots were dedicated to him. Ahaz outvied the king of

Israel in idolatry. Other Assyrian elements were now introduced into Judah. The Assyrian language, which closely resembles that of the Aramæans, was spoken by the courtiers to facilitate communication with their sovereign lord. Ahaz went beyond all bounds in his love of imitation. Once, when a misfortune befell him, he determined to sacrifice his own son in honour of Moloch, for this cruel rite was part of the Assyrian creed. In the beautiful vale of Hinnom, or Ben Hinnom, at the southern extension of the valley of Kidron, where the Siloah spring and other brooklets cause the growth of a magnificent vegetation, a fire-altar was erected. There, Ahaz regardless of the heart-rending lamentations of his son, sacrificed the innocent child.

The example of Ahaz was, as a matter of course, not without influence on others. The nobles of Judah, who had a decided preference for all that was foreign, because it gave full vent to their passions, gladly welcomed this inroad of Assyrian customs. Favoured by the powerlessness of King Ahaz, they could indulge in their sensual amusements, and continue their acts of injustice towards the nation. The priests were also infected by the bad example. From motives whether of selfishness or of fear, they were silent as to the evil deeds of the king and the nobles, or they even connived at them. They preached for hire according to the wishes of the mighty nobles. One of these depraved priests appears to have asserted that the sacrifice of the first-born was not displeasing to the God of Israel, but that such offerings were acceptable to Him. The Law of Moses had commanded the first-born to be sanctified to the Lord, and had ordered him to be sacrificed to God by fire. Happily, there yet remained representatives of the ancient Law, men of purer feelings who loudly raised their voices in powerful and eloquent protest against these crimes and this depravity. A younger prophet of this

time laid his finger on the gaping wound, and not alone called this crime by its right name, but also pointed out the source from whence the evil had arisen. The second Micah from Morasha had probably been educated in Isaiah's school, and shared with him the arduous task of appealing to the hearts of the sinners, and of making clear to them the necessary results of their evil-doings. He probably took up his dwelling-place in Jerusalem, but knowing the feelings prevalent in the country places and villages, he was more observant of those localities than were the other prophets.

In a speech uttered in the time of King Ahaz, Micah laid bare the prevalent religious and moral evils, and he declaimed especially against human sacrifices. Notwithstanding all this, the evil spread further, and also attacked the healthy portions of the nation. False prophets arose, who in God's name spoke in favour of crimes and sins, with the object of flattering the men in power. These false prophets spoke with eloquence—they pretended to have had visions; they employed the prophetic mode of speech, and by these means brought about a terrible confusion of ideas. The nation became confused and knew not what to believe—whether to credit those who blamed and passed judgment on the prevailing customs, or those who depicted existing things in the most glowing colours. This pitiable reign of King Ahaz exceeded in its evil results the six years of Athaliah's misgovernment. The king trampled the ancient law under his feet, and introduced idolatrous practices combined with immorality and contempt of all justice. The nobles could give free license to their desires, and the false prophets spoke in favour of their errors, and no regard was paid to the true prophets and advocates of right.

But in the meantime political events took their course and gave rise to fresh complications. In

the kingdom of Samaria, which since its separation from the eastern and northern districts could no longer be called the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, a misguided course was still pursued. The wounds inflicted by the Assyrians had not crushed the pride and selfishness of those in power. They spoke scornfully, and ignored all deplorable realities. "Dwellings of brick have fallen in; we will, therefore, erect buildings of stone. The sycamores have been hewn down; well, let us plant cedars instead." The drunkenness prevailing amongst the Ephraimite nobles did not allow them to perceive that unless they roused themselves effectually their former defeats would only be the prelude to their complete destruction. To this shortsightedness, perhaps in consequence of it, anarchy succeeded. Pekah, having been slain by Hoshea, the ringleader of the conspirators, nine years elapsed in which no king could retain power. Hoshea appears to have refused the crown of thorns at the outset, and there was no one else who could lay claim to sovereign power. From the time that Pul had taken part in the contest around Lebanon, and Tiglath-Pileser had put an end to the Aramæan kingdom, war had become inevitable between the two great States on the Nile and the Tigris. Assyria and Egypt watched each other suspiciously, and endeavoured to prepare for the struggle. Each endeavoured to strengthen itself and weaken the enemy by raids and attacks and by the acquisition of new allies. The kingdom of Israel had become an appendage of Assyria. It had to pay a yearly tribute and submit to other humiliations.

Meanwhile the doom of Samaria was in process of fulfilment. Was it from a knowledge of their disunion and weakness, or only from a thoughtless whim that they recognised Hoshea, the son of Elah, and the murderer of King Pekah, as their king? This last king of Samaria (727-719) was

better than his predecessors, or, perhaps, not so bad as they were. He was also warlike, but he was unable to avert the impending destruction. He appears to have secretly entered into connections with Egypt, which continually duped him with false promises. At this time a warlike king of Assyria, Shalmaneser, proceeded against Elulai, king of Tyre and Phœnicia, and subdued him. The Tyrian kingdom was not able to offer any resistance. On this occasion Shalmaneser advanced against Samaria in order to surprise it. Hoshea did not await his coming, but went and met the great king, submitted to him, and promised him gifts of allegiance. But hardly had the Assyrian king withdrawn than conspiracies were organised against him. Hoshea commenced the secession by withdrawing the yearly tribute, and Phœnicia followed suit.

Shalmaneser thereupon collected his troops, and crossing the Euphrates and Lebanon, proceeded first against the Phœnicians. At his approach, the hope of the nations that they would obtain their freedom appears to have deserted them. The Phœnician towns of Zidon, Acre, and even the capital of ancient Tyre, yielded probably without a struggle. From Acre, Shalmaneser advanced to the Samaritan kingdom by way of the plain of Jezreel. The Israelite towns submitted to the mighty king, or the inhabitants fled to the capital. Hoshea's courage did not fail, but he continued his opposition, though, as it appears, the expected or promised help from Egypt was withheld. The capital, Samaria—which lay in a mountain gorge—could hold out, if fortified. Meanwhile, Hoshea and the inhabitants of Samaria hoped for some unlooked-for event, which should compel Shalmaneser to retreat. The walls, towers, and roofs of Samaria were therefore fortified, and rendered capable of defence; provisions and water supplies

were also collected, and all the preparations were made which are needful in a besieged city. The Assyrians, meanwhile, had brought the art of attacking and capturing fortified cities to perfection. An attack and defence must have required great energy and endurance; the siege of Samaria lasted nearly three years (from the summer of 721 till the summer of 719). All exertions, all the courage and patience of the besieged proved fruitless. The capital of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, after an existence of two hundred years, was taken by storm. The last king of that State, Hoshea, though he was probably taken prisoner, was mercifully treated by his conqueror. He was deprived of his dignities, and was imprisoned for life. No pen has pourtrayed how many thousands perished in this last contest of the kingdom of Israel, or how many were carried off into banishment. The kingdom was so estranged from those who recorded the memorials of the nation, that they devoted but few words to its decline. No lament resounded, as though the sad fate of the nation was a matter of indifference to the poets. The prediction of the prophets had been fulfilled. Ephraim was no more; the idols of Dan, Samaria, and other cities, wandered away to Nineveh, and prisoners in thousands were carried off and dispersed. They were sent to colonize the thinly-populated territories—the position of which is not precisely known—in Halah and Habor on the river Gozan, and in the towns of mountainous Media. The kingdom of the Ten Tribes, or Israel, existed for two centuries and a half, twenty kings ruled over it; but in one day it disappeared, leaving no trace behind. Alienated, in the first place, through the obstinacy of Ephraim, which refused to hearken to the emancipating and strengthening moral Law, it had fallen into a state of idolatry and its attendant vices. The country cast forth the Ten Tribes, as it

had cast forth the Canaanite tribes. Where did they remain? Cheats and dreamers have claimed to be descended from them. A few of them, such as agriculturists, vine-dressers, and shepherds, no doubt remained in the country, and others from noble families, especially those from the borders of Judah, no doubt took refuge in that country.

Thus the diseased part, which had infected and maimed the entire body of the nation, was cut off and rendered harmless. The tribe of Ephraim, which, on its first entry into the country, had caused by its pride and selfishness the disintegration, the weakening, and later on, the destruction of a kingdom almost risen to the position of a sovereign power, was now lamenting in exile. "Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth." (Jeremiah xxxi. 17.) The body of the nation seemed to have been more at ease and healthier after the removal of its unruly member. The tribes of Judah and Benjamin with their dependencies of Simeon and Levi, which, since the destruction of the Ten Tribes, had comprised the people of Israel, or the "remnant" of Israel, now rose to new power and developed fresh splendour. The destruction of Samaria had struck a severe blow, but for the moment it served to rouse the people to put aside the follies and sins which had led to depravity and weakness. The people and nobles were, at least for a time, no longer deaf to the exhortations of the prophets; Isaiah's prediction to erring Samaria—that Ephraim's crown of glory would surely fade (Isaiah xxviii. 4) had been realised, and he was therefore the more readily listened to. What was wanting for Jerusalem to share the fate of Samaria? It lay at the mercy of the Assyrian conqueror. In Jerusalem

the people were filled with fear, humility, and a desire to listen to the words of those who would lead them in the right path.

Fortunately a king now occupied the throne the like of whom had not been known since the time of David. Hezekiah (724-696) the son of Ahaz was the very opposite of his father. His gentle, poetical soul was filled with the ideal, which he beheld in the peculiar Law, in the ordinances and precepts of the earliest ages. With the same eagerness with which his father had paid homage to the stranger, Hezekiah was intent on re-establishing the ancient Judæan customs, and on purifying religious beliefs and institutions. He accepted the Law as the guiding principle by which to rule his life and that of his nation. He was not only endowed with the qualities of justice, generosity, and greatness of mind, but also with those virtues which as a rule are not found in a crowned head, namely, gentleness, modesty, and humility. He possessed a deep feeling of piety and pure veneration of God, qualities of as rare occurrence as those of perfection in art or of genius in generalship.

The prophets may have recognised the nobleness of mind and soul which possessed the youthful king, or their prophetic vision may have revealed to them the qualities which adorned him. Possibly the prophets may have directly influenced him by educating him in their ways.

During Ahaz's misrule, the prophets and the circle of milder men who composed the kernel and heart of the nation of Israel, turned their attention to the young prince, from whom they expected the restoration of the golden age enjoyed during the glorious days of David. Hezekiah had witnessed the sins of his father with pain, and bore testimony to the aversion he felt for them immediately after his father's death. He did not

have his father's corpse interred in the hereditary sepulchre of the house of David, but in a specially prepared grave. Hezekiah expressed his convictions in a psalm which he composed on his accession to the throne, and which is in the form of a manifesto. (Ps. ci.)

Hezekiah's reign was rich in events of great import and in poetical creations. The golden age would have indeed recurred, had it not been that his wishes were opposed by a barrier, which he found it impossible to break down. Royalty had long ceased to have sole power in Judah. The overseer of the palace or superintendent (Sochen) had full power over the army and the officers of the court. He kept the king a prisoner in his own apartments. In Hezekiah's time, the superintendent Shebna behaved as though he were the possessor of the throne and of sovereign power. At first the courtiers and those who were in office as judges or otherwise gave the young king free scope, not knowing his character or force of will. During this time Hezekiah could carry his good resolves into effect, and in part introduce innovations. He removed the idols, and introduced the belief in a Unity by dismissing the more unworthy of the courtiers from the palace, and filling their places with more deserving men.

It was no slight task to counteract the accumulated sin and immorality of ages. The Temple was deserted, and the country was filled with idols and altars. Hezekiah re-opened the sanctuary, and reinstated it in its honours. In order to root out the evils of idolatry for good, he ordained that altars should be no longer erected on the mountains and heights, not even for the worship of God, but that all who felt a desire to show honour to the Deity should repair to Jerusalem. This precaution appeared to many to be directed against freedom of divine worship, and against liberty of

conscience. But Hezekiah felt that he dared not spare their liberty if he wished to ensure the purification of the people from its enervating customs. When the spring festival approached, he commanded that the paschal lamb, which had hitherto been sacrificed on private altars, should only be offered in the sanctuary at Jerusalem. He however deferred the celebration of the feast from the usual month to the one following. Meanwhile, however, the courtiers did not consent to leave the king independent in his government. The inspector of the palace—Shebna—appears to have gradually wrested all power from him. Hezekiah was a poet, an ideal nature, weak and yielding, and possessed of but little firmness of will. Men with such a disposition can easily be led, and even kings may submit to those of more powerful will. Shalmaneser's invasion of Tyre and Samaria, which occurred in the first year of Hezekiah's reign, naturally aroused great alarm and fear at Jerusalem and at the Court. It was necessary to take a firm decision—either to join the allies or to give hostages as a sign of fealty to the Assyrian monarch. Hezekiah, from his peculiar character and mode of thought, was wavering as to the course he should take. Was it honourable to desert his fellow-tribesmen, who had been bleeding to death under the three years' invasion of Samaria, and who, if conquered, could only have a most dismal fate? Should he aid or desert them? On the other hand, was it prudent to expose himself to the anger of the great monarch? Hezekiah was doubtless glad that Shebna and his ministers relieved him from the trouble of deciding.

In consequence of this breach amongst the highest authorities of the country, Hezekiah's government appears full of contradiction. There were at once elevated and low feelings—moral improvement and degradation, pure belief in God and

court paid to foreign aid; the king an ideal of justice and his capital full of murderers. Hezekiah was not even successful in effecting the banishment of idolatry. The nobles kept their silver and golden idols, and worshipped the handiwork of man; they retained the statues of Astarte under the thickly-laden terebinth trees, which had been planted for the purpose. This internal disunion occasioned by the powerlessness of the king and the obstinacy of the palace inspector and the nobles, exercised a bad influence on the foreign relations of the Government. The Judæan statesmen now suddenly, after the fall of Samaria, followed a course of politics which would have been more wise and more honourable if it had been resolved upon earlier. They adopted the plan of breaking with Assyria and uniting themselves with Egypt. They took similar measures to those which had been pursued a year before with regard to Egypt. They now courted the aid of Egypt in order to obtain, if not an army, yet a sufficient number of horses to resist Assyria. The plan of rebelling against the sovereign power of Assyria was naturally conducted in secret, for the premature report of their intentions might have led to great misfortunes. But, however secret their undertakings might be, the Judæan statesmen could not keep them concealed from public notice. They could not escape Isaiah's prophetic vision, and he exerted all his eloquence in order, if possible, to prevent their rash proceedings. His most glorious, most thrilling speeches were made at this time of public anxiety. All the weapons of prophetic oratory—description of the threatening evils, scorn of their blindness, and exhortations and cheering prospects for the future—all these he employed in order to win his obstinate countrymen from their undertakings. The most beautiful expressions and most striking metaphors, the most touching thoughts, dropped from

his lips in powerful eloquence. Isaiah's advice was that Judah should hold itself neutral in the hot contest which was about to break forth between Assyria and Egypt.

Meanwhile matters took their course regardless of Isaiah's exhortations and advice. King Hezekiah, for all steps were taken in his name, gave up his allegiance to the Assyrians; at least, he no longer sent tributary offerings to Nineveh, and the only result which could be expected followed. King Sennacherib collected a large army in order to give a crushing blow not only to Judah but also to Egypt. By subduing the intermediate lands of Aram, Phœnicia, Samaria, and Philistia, the way to Egypt was rendered accessible, whilst all fear of attacks on its part was rendered groundless. Judah was prepared for defence. The generals felt themselves too weak for an open warfare, and they therefore determined to occupy the mountain fastnesses, and hoped to delay the Assyrian troops until the arrival of their Egyptian allies. Jerusalem was fortified with especial care. The weak parts of the wall were repaired, the walls themselves raised, and those houses which had been extended as far as the walls, in consequence of the increased size of the town, were pulled down. A new wall was erected round the old fortifications of the town of David (Zion), and the lower town (Millo), and on this wall towers were built. The northern lake, which was traversed by the spring of Gihon and filled with water, was closed up, and the water was conducted into the town by means of a subterranean canal. The aqueduct was also pulled down in order to cut off the water supply of the enemy, and thus to avoid a protracted siege. The armoury, the house of the forest of Lebanon, was provided with instruments of warfare.

Shebna, the inspector and provider of the palace, appears to have been the moving spirit in all these

arrangements. Both he and the princes of Judah, with their adherents, were of good courage, and without fear on the advance of the Assyrians. In fact, the most joyful feelings obtained in Jerusalem; the evenings were spent in rejoicing; the people ate and drank and made merry. As though unable quietly to await the arrival of the enemy, they climbed on to the roofs of the houses in order to espy them. Isaiah is said to have deprecated such folly and daring. In an exhortation, every word of which was of crushing force, he pourtrayed to the nation, or rather to the nobles, their thoughtless confidence. (Isaiah xxii. 1–13.)

This speech of Isaiah's, directed as it was against the most powerful man in Jerusalem, must have created a great sensation. It roused King Hezekiah from his retirement, for soon after this Eliakim, son of Hilkiah, was raised to the post which Shebna had so long occupied. This new mayor of the palace acted according to the precept of Isaiah, and Hezekiah, through his means, appears to have been drawn into a show of interest in public affairs. Shebna's fall was a change for the better. What had been done could not however be undone. The Assyrian monarch Sennacherib, filled with anger at Hezekiah's rebellion, was already on his way to Judah in order to destroy it. A part of his army having crossed the Jordan, proceeded towards the centre of the country. All fortified towns that lay on the way were taken by storm and destroyed, and the inhabitants fled weeping to the capital. The roads were laid desolate, no traveller could cross the country, for the enemy respected no man. The bravest lost courage whilst the enemy came ever nearer to the capital; their daring was changed to despair. There was no thought of opposition; but where all despaired the prophet Isaiah remained steadfast in his courage. On an open place in

Jerusalem he held forth in one of his inspired and metrical exhortations such as have never flowed from other lips than his. Isaiah unfolded to Israel a glowing future consequent on their deliverance from Assyria. The scattered of all lands should be led home, the exiles of the Ten Tribes should be re-united to Judah. Jealousy and enmity should not appear again; miracles which occurred at the time of the Exodus from Egypt would be repeated, the nation should once more raise its voice in inspired hymns. What marvellous spiritual power thus to have held fast to a belief in the ultimate victory of justice and everlasting peace, amidst the terror, devastation, and despair, and the deathlike gloom of the present!

Sennacherib had led his troops (then proceeding to the attack on Egypt) towards the Philistine slope on the south without pausing before Jerusalem, and he made Lachish his headquarters. This place was one of the most important of the provincial cities of Judah, and for what purpose should he besiege the town of Jerusalem, fortified as it was by nature and human art? He thought that when he had completely subdued the land of Judah the capital would yield of its own accord. Then Jerusalem would suffer a similar fate to Samaria, and the few remaining tribes would be carried off into captivity and scattered abroad, and be lost amongst the various nationalities. Even with this hopeless prospect before him, Isaiah held firm to the prediction that Judah would not be destroyed. He contended that it must needs suffer under the dominion of Sennacherib, but that these very sufferings would tend to the improvement of a part if not of the entire nation.

Isaiah was not the only prophet who at this day of oppression and imminent destruction, not only held aloft the banner of hope, but predicted a glorious future for Israel, in which other nations

should likewise take part. Micah spoke in a similar strain to Isaiah, though his speeches were not so artistic or striking. But amidst the din of battle he spoke yet more decidedly of the everlasting peace which was to obtain amongst the nations, and he thus endeavoured to raise the fallen hopes of Jerusalem.

The actual present, however, formed a striking contrast to Isaiah's and Micah's high-flown predictions of a most brilliant and noble future. King Hezekiah, who trembled at the precarious state of Jerusalem consequent on the subjection and destruction of the country, now sent messengers to Sennacherib in Lachish, expressing contrition at his rebellion and giving assurances of his submission. The Assyrian king demanded in the first place the immense sum of 300 khikars (talents) of silver, and 30 khikars of gold. Hezekiah succeeded in collecting this sum, but he did it with a heavy heart, for he found himself obliged to remove the golden ornaments which adorned the temple. When Sennacherib received this sum he demanded more, and unqualified submission—mercy or no mercy. In order to add weight to his demand, he sent a division of his army towards Jerusalem. This detachment was posted on the north-east of the city on the way to the northern lake. Here preparations were made for the siege, and the Assyrians summoned King Hezekiah to an interview. Rab-shakeh, one of the Assyrian officials, represented Sennacherib, and spoke with as much disdain as if the conquest of Jerusalem were as easy as to rob a bird's nest. The Judæan warriors stationed on the outer wall listened with intense interest to the result of the interview. In order to quench their courage Rab-shakeh uttered his bold and daring speech in the Hebrew or Judæan tongue, in order that the listeners might understand him. When Hezekiah's officers requested Rab-shakeh to address them

rather in the Aramæan language, he replied that he desired to speak in their own language, so that the warriors on the outer wall might understand him, and might not share Hezekiah's error. In order to win them to his side, Rab-shakeh called aloud to them that they should not be persuaded by Hezekiah into the belief that God would save them. Were the gods of those countries subdued by the Assyrians able to save their people? The God of Israel had not been able even to rescue Samaria from the king of Assyria. Rab-shakeh openly demanded of the Judæan warriors that they should desert their king and acknowledge Sennacherib, and he would then lead them into a land as fruitful as that of Judah. The nation and the warriors were silent on hearing those words. But when they became known in Jerusalem they spread fear and consternation amongst all classes of the inhabitants. Hezekiah, therefore, appointed a fast and a procession to the Temple, to which building he repaired, having clothed himself in mourning garments. Isaiah made use of this opportunity in order to appeal to the blinded princes of Judah, whose danger could not wean them from sin, and to impress on them that mere outward piety, typified as it was by sacrifices and fasts, were of no avail. The address he gave must have had a crushing effect. (Isaiah ch. i.) Safety and rescue could only be brought about by a thorough moral regeneration and purer thoughts, but how could this be effected in all haste? Rab-shakeh insisted on a decision—and the courage of the troops and the nation had become damped. Who could say but that in order to save their lives they might open the gates and admit the enemy. All eyes were, therefore, turned on the prophet Isaiah. The king sent the highest dignitaries and the elders of the priests to him, that he might speak words of comfort to the unworthy nation—to the remnant of the people which was

crowded together into Jerusalem. He spoke in few but eloquent words. He exhorted the king to throw off his terror of the scornful victor, and predicted that Sennacherib, scared by some report, would raise the siege and return to his own country. This announcement appears to have pacified not alone the king, but also the terror-stricken nation. Hezekiah then sent to Rab-shakeh a reply for which the latter must have been unprepared. When Rab-shakeh imparted the decision which Hezekiah had formed, Sennacherib was, doubtless, very indignant that the prince of a small domain, to whom only the capital remained, should venture to resist him. He immediately sent a messenger with a letter to Hezekiah, in which he gave utterance to his contempt for the little state and for the God in whom Hezekiah trusted. He enumerated therein the fortresses which had been subdued by the Assyrians: "Have their gods been able to save them, and dost thou hope that confidence in thy God will save thee?"

The reply to this blasphemous epistle was dictated by Isaiah. He said that Sennacherib should return to his country in abject defeat, for God was not willing to give up the city. Before Rab-shakeh could bring the answer to Sennacherib a change had already taken place. Tirhakah, the Ethiopian king of Egypt, who desired to prevent the advance of the Assyrians, went to meet them with a large army. Hearing of the advance of the Egyptian and Ethiopian troops, Sennacherib left his encampment in Lachish, collected his scattered forces, and proceeded southward as far as the Egyptian frontier town, Pelusium, which he besieged.

Hezekiah's despair at Sennacherib's blasphemous letter was calmed by Isaiah's prediction, that though the land would indeed suffer want in the coming year, yet it would then once more regain its fertility; that the remnant of Judah would strengthen

its roots below, and its fruit should increase above, and this revival should proceed from Jerusalem; but Sennacherib should not be permitted to direct even an arrow against Jerusalem. Whilst the king and the nobles who believed in Isaiah's prophecy, gave themselves up to hope, and thought to behold the realization of these hopes in the departure of of the besieging troops from before Jerusalem, an event occurred which roused fresh terror in Jerusalem. Hezekiah sickened with a virulent tumour, and was in such imminent danger that Isaiah even advised him to put his house in order and arrange for the succession, as he would not recover from his sickness. The death of the king, without heirs, in this stormy time, would have been a signal for disunion among the princes of Judah, and would have occasioned a civil war in the besieged citadel. The nation was strongly attached to its gentle and noble king. He was the very breath of its life; and the prospect of losing him made him doubly dear to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Hezekiah, lying on his sick bed, at this sorrowful prediction turned his face to the wall and tearfully prayed to God. Then Isaiah announced to him that his prayers had been heard, that God would send him health, and that on the third day he should repair to the Temple. By the application of soft figs the swelling disappeared, and he became well again. When Hezekiah had recovered, the king composed a heartfelt psalm of praise, to be sung in the Temple. (Isaiah xxxviii. 7 seq.)

The recovery of the king caused great joy in Jerusalem; but it was not unmixed, as anxious cares were aroused by the threatening attitude of Sennacherib. Doubt and anxiety were felt in the capital so long as Sennacherib's contest with Egypt remained unended. If he were victorious, the thrones of Judah and David would be lost. How long this war and the siege of Pelusium lasted

is not certain. Suddenly the joyful news reached Jerusalem that the Assyrians and Sennacherib had returned in hot haste to their own country (711). What had happened to their numerous host? Nothing definite was known, and the scene of action lay far away. In Jerusalem it was related that by a devouring pestilence the Angel of Death had destroyed the entire Assyrian host, 185,000 men. In Egypt, the priests related that a numberless swarm of fieldmice had gnawed to pieces the quivers, bows, and trappings of the army till they were useless, and that the soldiers, deprived of their weapons, were obliged to take to flight. Whatever may have caused the destruction of the mighty host of Sennacherib, his contemporaries appear to have considered it as a miracle, and as a punishment sent to the Assyrian king for his pride and blasphemy. In Jerusalem the joy following on their anxiety was increased by the fact that the prophet had repeatedly predicted, from the very commencement of the attack, that the Assyrians should not cast one arrow against Jerusalem, and that Sennacherib should return on the way by which he had come, and that he should retreat without having effected his intentions.

They gave vent to their deep feelings of gratitude at their deliverance in the beautiful hymns—beautiful in form and thought—which were composed by the Korahite Levites, and sung in the Temple. (Psalms xlvi. and lxxvi.)

Thus Jerusalem was delivered from the Assyrians. Isaiah's prediction that "Assur's yoke should fall from the neck of Judah" had been literally fulfilled. The inhabitants of the country, who had been partly shut up in the capital, and had partly fled for refuge to the neighbouring hollows and caves, now returned to their homes, and tilled the land in safety. All fear of the dreaded glance of the Assyrian king having passed away, the Judæans,

whose territory was but small, could now seek out other dwelling places where they could settle down and increase in numbers. Hezekiah's thoughts were not directed towards war; he was the personification of a pacific prince. It appears that the neighbouring people called on him to decide questions of justice, and that fugitives and persecuted men sought protection with him. Although Judah could not be said to boast of victories under Hezekiah, it yet attained to an important position amongst the nations.

After the defeat of Sennacherib, a king from distant parts endeavoured to form an alliance with Judah. The king of Babylon, Merodach-baladan (Mardo-kempad), son of Baladan (721—710), sent an embassy with letters and presents to Hezekiah, ostensibly under the pretext of congratulating him on his recovery, but doubtless in order to form an alliance with him against their common foe. Hezekiah being naturally gratified at this sign of respect from a distant land, received the Babylonian embassy with the customary honours, and showed them his treasures. His pleasure and parade was not pleasing to Isaiah, who prophesied injury to Judah from the land with which it was forming a treaty. The king, however, received the reproof of the prophet with humility.

The fifteen years of Hezekiah's reign after the downfall of the Assyrian kingdom, was a golden age for the inner development of the remnant of Israel. They could dwell without disturbance under their vines and fig-trees. As in the days of David and Solomon, strangers immigrated into the happy region of Judah, where they were kindly received, and where they united themselves to the people of Israel. The poor and sorrow-stricken, the mourner and outcast, were the objects of the king's special care. He could now put into execution his heartfelt desire to have the faithful of his

land, devout and honourable men, to live in his palace. The disciples of Isaiah, imbued as they were with their master's spirit, were the friends and advisers of Hezekiah, and were called "Hezekiah's people."

The second part of Hezekiah's reign was altogether a time of happy inspiration for the poet. The fairest blossoms of psalmody flourished at this period. Besides the songs of thanksgiving and holy hymns which flowed from the souls of the Levites, probably for use in the Temple, secular songs were dedicated in love and praise to King Hezekiah. On the occasion of his marriage with a beautiful maiden, whose charms had touched the king's heart, one of the Korahites composed a song of love. The two kinds of poetry, the primeval property of the Hebrew people, which the literature of no other nation has paralleled, the poetical and metrical expression of prophetic eloquence and the psalm, reached their culmination under Hezekiah. The third kind of Hebrew poetry, the Proverbs, was not only collected, but also amplified by the poets of Hezekiah's time.

Hezekiah ruled in quiet and peace until the end of his days. The defeat of Sennacherib had been so complete that it prevented his undertaking other expeditions against Judah. Great joy was felt when Sennacherib, who had cast such proud and blasphemous utterances at Israel's God and nation, was murdered by his own sons, Adrammelech and (Nergal-) Sharezer, in the temple of one of the Assyrian gods. Nothing is known of the last days of Hezekiah (696). He was the last king whose remains were interred in the royal mausoleum. The people, who were strongly attached to him, gave him a magnificent burial. It appears that he left an only son named Manasseh, whom his wife, Hephzi-bah, had borne to him after the close of the Assyrian war.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE LAST KINGS OF JUDAH.

Manasseh—Fanatical Hatred of Hezekiah's Policy.—Assyrian Worship Introduced—The Anavim—Persecution of the Prophets—Assarhaddon—The Colonisation of Samaria—Amon—Josiah—Huldah and Zephaniah—Affairs in Assyria—Regeneration of Judah under Josiah—Repairing of the Temple—Jeremiah—The Book of Deuteronomy—Josiah's Passover—Battle at Megiddo.

695—608 B.C.

It was not destined that the Judæan nation should enjoy uninterrupted happiness for even a few generations. Its strength was tried by rapid changes from prosperity to misfortune. Close upon the power and unity of the second half of Hezekiah's reign came weakness and disintegration; quiet and peace were followed by wild disturbances, and the spring-time of culture by a destructive drought. It is true that no disasters of a political nature disturbed the country under the rule of Hezekiah's successor; perils threatened the land from abroad, but soon passed over. But at home unfortunate circumstances arose which brought about a schism, and thus led to lasting weakness. What can be worse for the commonweal than that the members of it are filled with jealousy and malice towards each other, and that the people of the country are imbued with a hatred of their capital. Such feelings arose under the government of Hezekiah's son, and became a curse to the land for more than half a century (695—641). Manasseh's youth was in part the cause of this disaffection.

Under the sway of a boy of twelve, whose government lies in the hands of his servants, greed for gain and even worse passions are apt to rule, unless those in power are men of great moral

worth, whose patriotism surpasses their self-love. The princes of the house of Judah had not, however, attained to this moral height. They were, in fact, filled with anger at the neglect which they had suffered during Hezekiah's reign, and only anxious to regain their former position, by removing the intruders and satisfying their vengeance. Courtiers and officers now came into power who seemed to find their chief occupation in reversing the order of things which had been established under Hezekiah. One does not know whether to call the latter a renewal of the old customs, or the establishment of a new system based on the ancient Israelite law, on the principle of the unity of God, of His immateriality, of a hatred of all idolatrous worship, and of a simplicity of religious culture.

It was the aim of the fanatics who stood at the head of the government to overturn this system. An idolatrous faction was formed, which was not so much influenced by force of habit, love of imitation, or religious feeling however misdirected, as by passionate hatred of all that appertained to the ancient Israelite customs, and love for all that was foreign to it. At the head of this party were the princes, under whose influence and care the young king was placed. Not long after Manasseh's accession to the throne the nobles, who acted in the king's name, proceeded with the innovations which they had planned. Their first step was to proclaim lawful the use of high altars, which Hezekiah had so strongly reprobated. They then introduced the wild orgies of idolatry into Jerusalem and the Temple. Not alone the ancient Canaanitish but also the Assyrian and Babylonian modes of worship became customary at the Temple, as if in scorn of the God of Israel. In the courts of the Temple altars were erected to Baal and Astarte, and smaller altars on the roofs of houses in honour of the five wandering stars. In the court

of the Temple a large image (Ssemel), probably of the Assyrian goddess Mylitta, was erected in order to give offence to the God of Israel.

The moral results of this mingling of vicious idolatry were yet worse than the outward signs of it. The profligate temple-servants and priestesses (Kedeshoth) were again established in tents, where they led a wild and dissolute life. The furnace was once more opened in the beautiful vale of Ben-Hinnom, and there in moments of danger tender children were cast into the fire. Everything was done to cause the memory of the God of Israel to fall into oblivion. The faction of idolaters persuaded themselves and others that God had become powerless, and that He could neither bring them good nor bad fortune. The desire of imitation was also partly the cause of this religious and moral perversion. Force of habit and compulsion, exercised on the disaffected, soon spread the evil, which proceeded from the court and the prince till it extended over the whole land. The priests of the family of Aaron were probably at first unwilling to participate in this secession from the God of Israel. Idolatrous priests (Khemarim) were therefore brought into the country, who, as in the days of Jezebel and Athaliah, were permitted to take part in the service of the Temple. Nor were false prophets wanting to lend their voices to these abominations. What cause has been so bad that, if it has enjoyed the favour of the great, has not found eloquent tongues to shield, justify, or even recommend it as the only true and good cause? This state of things would have led to the utter oblivion of all the past, and to the destruction of the nation which was to bring blessings to the entire human race.

Happily there existed in Jerusalem a strong party who respected the law so despised and scoffed at by the court faction. These formed a striking contrast

to the representatives of idolatry, and were determined to seal their convictions with their blood. This "school of God," whom Isaiah had taught and educated as his own children, were the long-suffering Anavim, whose numbers and position were of but slight importance, but whose determination rendered them a strong power. They may be called the Anavites or prophetic party; they called themselves "the community of the upright" (*Sod Jescharim w'Edah*). This community was subjected to many hard trials through the change under Manasseh. The least of their troubles was that those men whom Hezekiah had placed as judges and officers of state were turned out of their positions by the court party, and that Aaronites, of the family of Zadok the high-priest who refused to take part in the idolatrous worship, were dismissed from the Temple, and their incomes, derived from sacrifices and gifts, taken from them; but harder trials were before them. How could they be silent in this reversal of all order? They were not silent, but raised their voices loudly against such sins. Doubtless other members of the prophetic school also expressed their horror at the daring of the court party, for Manasseh and the princes of Judah did not stop short of any crime, but like the abhorred Jezebel drowned the voices of the prophets in blood. The prophetic utterances of this period have not been preserved; the zealous men of God had no time to put their sayings to paper. A violent death overtook them before they could seize the pencil, or they were obliged to hide their thoughts in vague phrases. As though the sad times were doomed to be forgotten, the historians have noted down but little of public interest. A deeply touching event occurred during Manasseh's reign, and the books of history have given but slight or no account of it.

One of the sons of Sennacherib, whose parricidal act destroyed the proud conqueror in the temple,

had placed himself on the tottering throne of Nineveh. He also died a violent death at the hand of his brother Assarhaddon. Assarhaddon (680—668) utilised the confusion and civil war in order to subject his mother's country, Assyria, to his rule. Thus strengthened, Assarhaddon commenced a war with Egypt, the conquest of which his father had been obliged to relinquish. Some of his generals appear to have landed on the Judæan coast in order to effect Manasseh's subjection by means of threats. Manasseh went to him to secure a fair peace, but, as is related, he was made a captive, and led in chains to Babylon. It was a bad omen for the house of David, which had become faithless to its origin, and had shown a blind love of the stranger.

Sennacherib's son is supposed to have sent the prisoners of the countries he had subdued out of Babylon, Cuthah, Sepharvaim, and other towns, in order to colonise Samaria. This event, which, at the time, was of no consequence to Judæa, was destined to be important in the future. These exiles, who were called Cuthæans from their origin and Samaritans from their dwelling-places, gradually adopted Israelite customs from the small remnant of Israelites who remained after the destruction of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. The Cuthæans made pilgrimages to the holy places of Bethel, where Israelite priests performed the service. The Cuthæans, however, continued to worship idols, and some of them sacrificed human beings. Manasseh himself was delivered from captivity and sent back to his country by Assarhaddon or his successor.

Things were not improved on his return. Idolatrous worship and the unfortunate conditions brought about by immorality and cruel persecution lasted until his death. When he died (641) he was not, like his predecessor, buried in the city of David, but in the garden of the royal palace of Uzza.

He had himself selected this spot for his tomb, and had thereby tacitly acknowledged himself unworthy to rest in the grave of his forefather David.

He was succeeded by his eldest son Amon (640-639), who, although at his accession, older than his father had been, yet appears to have had no more aptitude for reigning than his predecessor. The idolatrous errors, which had brought with them consequences so injurious to morality in his father's reign, continued under his rule, but they do not appear as with his father to have been inveighed against by the prophets. However, he reigned for so short a time that but little is known of him, his deeds and sentiments. His servants—that is to say, the mayor of the palace and the chief courtiers around him—conspired against him, and killed him in his own palace (639). The nation appears to have loved Amon, for the people rose in rebellion against the conspirators, killed them, and placed Amon's young son Josiah, who was eight years of age, on the throne (638-608). This change of rule was not immediately felt. The nobles and princes of Judah continued to govern in the name of the king during his minority, and maintained the errors of Manasseh, which they sought to establish firmly.

But the number of patient sufferers, who clung to the precepts of the God of Israel, increased daily, and these formed themselves into an active body. From this circle various prophets arose under Josiah. They lent their words of fire to the promulgation of the pure doctrines of God, and opened their lips in the cause of right, and endeavoured to bring about a better state of things. A prophetess named Huldah also arose at this time, and her utterances, like those of Deborah, were much sought after. Zephaniah was the eldest of the later prophets. He was descended from a respected family in Jerusalem, whose forefathers were

known as far back as the fourth generation. He openly declaimed against the weakness of his contemporaries, their moral degradation, and their idolatrous errors, particularly those of the nobles and princes, who took pride in the imitation of all foreign customs. Like the older prophets Amos and Joel, he predicted the advent of "a terrible day of the Lord," a day of shade and darkness, black as night, and he especially predicted the total destruction of the proud city of Nineveh.

At this same time commenced the gradual decadence of Assyria's power. The nations who had formerly remained faithful to Assyria now separated themselves from the last but one of the Assyrian kings (Samuges ?), or were compelled by the Medes to renounce their allegiance. The second king of Media, Phraortes (Fravartch) subdued nation after nation, finally even the Persians, and in combination with the latter he undertook a campaign against Nineveh. The Assyrians, however, though deserted by their allies, were yet sufficiently strong and warlike to effect the defeat of the Median host (635) when Phraortes was killed. But his son Cyaxares, who was yet more daring and adventurous than his father, hastened to avenge the latter, collected a large army, which he divided according to the weapons used by the various soldiers, attacked Assyria, defeated its army, and advanced to Nineveh (634). Whilst besieging the Assyrian capital he was however forced to meet the countless hordes of wild Scythians, whom he bribed by large sums to refrain from hostilities. The Assyrians were also compelled to follow a like course, and the Scythians, after advancing through Phœnicia and Philistia, were only prevented from invading Egypt by the rich gifts and earnest entreaties of King Psammetich. Thereupon a great number of the Scythians quitted the neighbourhood and went to the north, a part of them, no doubt,

seizing on Asia Minor. A number of them remained in Philistia, overran the country, and burnt the temple of the Assyrian goddess of vice, Mylitta. The Scythians swarmed from Philistia into the neigbouring country of Judæa, ravaged the land, carried off the cattle, and burnt the cities and villages. They appear, however, not to have entered Jerusalem. No doubt the youthful king Josiah, with the mayor of his palace, went to meet them, and induced them by payment of treasure to spare the capital.

This reign of terror, when reports of the destruction of towns and the cruel murder of men were ever reaching the ears of the people, made a deep impression on the inhabitants of Judah. Where the predictions of the prophets were listened to with deaf ears, the actual fulfilment of them proved the folly of idolatrous worship. Had the gods of Assyria, Babylon, Phœnicia, or Philistia been able to save their people from the violent attack of the Scythians? A change of sentiments now came over the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the spirit of King Josiah was deeply touched. He was gentle, pious, and susceptible by nature, but from custom he had devoted himself to the follies of idolatry without, however, entirely identifying himself with the malpractices of the times. The eventful occurrences around showed him that he and his nation were wandering in crooked paths. He did not, however, venture, when he had come to this conclusion, to cast out from the capital of his kingdom an idol-worship which had been introduced during his grandfather's reign half a century before. He did not dare to arouse the princes of Judah, who held the reigns of power, and who were strongly attached to idolatry. This would have required heroic decision, and Josiah could not bring himself to act with the required strength of purpose. It

was, therefore, necessary for some one to urge him to action, and to the assertion of his royal power over those who surrounded him. The prophets, therefore, worked to this end of inducing Josiah to return to the service of their own God, and to put aside all foreign worship. Meanwhile he took one preliminary step, which was to rescue the Temple of the Lord from its deserted state and the decay into which it was falling. The walls, and halls, and outbuildings of the Temple were cracking and threatened to fall, the decorations had been carried away, but Josiah took measures to prevent its outward decay. He recalled the exiled Priests and Levites to the service of the Temple (627), and commanded them to collect money and to employ it in renovating the Temple. At their head he placed the high priest Hilkiah, whose house had been kept clean from the impurities of idol-worship. But it was difficult to collect money for repairing the Temple. The love of the rich for their Temple had grown cold, or the nation had become so impoverished through the pillages of the Scythians that it was impossible to reckon on freewill offerings like those in the times of King Joash. Thus it became necessary almost to beg together gifts and donations for the repairing of the sanctuary. Levitic emissaries went through the city and country, from house to house, asking for contributions. Meanwhile, though King Josiah was thus actively working for the Temple, he was wanting in firmness against the errors of idolatry. It was noticeable that a great number of the nobles had returned to their ancient creed, and that they swore by Jehovah, though they continued to worship idols. One other event had yet to come to pass before Josiah could resolve to terminate the rule of idolatry. And this influence, coming from two sides, induced him to take a final step. The necessary impetus came partly from one of the prophets, who, from early

youth, had spoken in powerful and irresistible language, and partly from a book which had revealed to the king the error of his indecision. These two combined to bring about a better state of things in a large circle, and also to lend fresh interest and a halo of poetry to the ancient law. The youth was the prophet Jeremiah, and the book that of Deuteronomy. Jeremijahu (Jeremiah), son of Hilkiah, (born 645–640, died 580–570,) came from the little town of Anathoth, in the tribe of Benjamin. He was not poor, though not actually rich. His uncle Shallum and the latter's son Hanameel (his mother's relations) possessed landed property in Anathoth.

Jeremiah's soul was rich and pure, like a clear mirror or a deep well-spring. Endowed with a tender disposition and inclined to melancholy, the religious and moral condition of his surroundings had made a sad impression on him, even in his earliest youth. All that was false, perverse, and unworthy was painful to his feelings, and filled him with grief. From the time that he took action, his countrymen the priests of Anathoth persecuted him with such burning hate that it was impossible to think that they could have originally directed his mind. No doubt, however, the writings of the elder prophets exercised an influence over his disposition and ideas. His spirit became so imbued with the teachings of the Law that he used its thoughts, expressions, and words as his own. This occupation with the written prophetic legacies gave his mind its tendency, and filled him with exalted ideas of God, of the moral order, the importance of Israel's past, and its significance in the future, and taught him to hate what was low. Such was Jeremiah's dedication as a prophet, and he afterwards initiated others, either in Anathoth or in Jerusalem. The description of his induction can bear no comparison with the simplicity and depth with which Isaiah asserted himself as a prophet. The times demanded

other eloquence to that of former periods. Moral degradation had more strongly penetrated the nation, and danger must ensue if help were not soon at hand. Jeremiah no longer spoke, like former prophets, to a small cultured circle, but to a great mass of people, to the princes, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the people of Judah. On them figures of speech would have been wasted; it was necessary to speak clearly, and to the purpose, in order that the predictions might have effect, and so Jeremiah spoke chiefly in simple prose, and only occasionally used metaphorical terms. Threats of punishment and announcements of salvation from the ancient prophets, with the exception of Isaiah, were mostly uncertain in their tenour, and on this account the scornful inhabitants of Jerusalem had cast them to the winds.

Jeremiah had to counteract the effects of such scornful indifference to prophetic announcements. He was endowed with greater prophetic gifts than any of his predecessors—even than Isaiah. He prophesied in the first instance from year to year; later on, when the tragic events reached their fulfilment, he predicted from month to month occurrences that were to come to pass, and his prophetic vision was realized with marvellous accuracy. He did not see the future in the uncertain light of dreams, but in broad daylight, with waking senses, and in communion with the outer world. Then he did not speak in enigmas, did not make hidden allusions to things, but spoke of them as they were. His pure prophetic spirit received the heavy task of rousing up the perverse nation, which had been wandering in wrong paths for nearly half a century, just at the time that the king was rousing himself from the indolent habits of lethargy into which he had drifted.

No sooner had Jeremiah been informed of his task, than his diffidence and fear disappeared. He

describes the sensations which the prophetic spirit awoke in him (Jeremiah xxiii. 29):

"Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord: and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"

His first speech of burning eloquence was directed against the nation which from its very commencement had fallen into a course of idolatrous errors and immoral deeds of horror. Jeremiah not only hurled his crushing words against the perverted worship of the Deity, but against the frequent recurrence of bloodshed (Jeremiah ii.).

Words like these from so young a speaker, could not fail to make an impression. Some of the noble families turned away from their immoral courses, and acknowleged the God worshipped by Jeremiah and the other prophets. The family of Shaphan, which occupied a high position, joined the prophet's party, and defended it with fervour. King Josiah, meanwhile devoted himself to the restoration of the ruined Temple. He commissioned (621) three of his chief officers—Shaphan, his captain of the city, Maasseiah, the governor of the city, and his chancellor Joah, to induce the high priests to employ the entire sums collected for their proper purposes, and to hand over the money (part of which was for building materials, and part for paying the architects) to the higher officials. When Hilkiah gave up the sum he also handed a large roll to Shaphan, saying, "I have found this Book of the Law in the Temple." Shaphan read the roll, and was so struck by the contents that he informed the king of the discovery that had been made. This book exercised a wonderful influence. The Book of the Law which the high priest Hilkiah gave to Shaphan to hand to the king was the last testament of the prophet Moses, which he commanded his people to take to heart before he left them for ever. It has an historical introduction, and the history itself is continued until after the

death of Moses. Laws are generally cold, stern, and hard, and with threatening gesture they say, "Thou shalt, or shalt not, or heavy punishment will overtake thee." The law-book found in the time of Josiah is not couched in such terms. It exhorts, warns, and actually entreats that this or that may be done or left undone. It uses the language of a loving father, whose son, standing before a great goal, is warned not to lose the bright future before him through his own fault, and thus become an object of scorn and disgrace. A pleasing breeze is wafted from this book of Deuteronomy. The laws (Mizvoth), statutes (Chukkim), and ordinances (Mishpatim) are surrounded by historical reminiscences, and clothed in the language of poetry, as though entwined by flowers.

The book also contains a peculiar hymn, said to have been composed by Moses. In this hymn it is stated how the nation, in consequence of its prosperity, would turn away to false gods, and that a depraved nation would punish them. How it would then see that its chosen gods could not avail it, and that God alone, who had so wonderfully guided it, who could kill and make to live, could wound and heal—how He would avenge it, and purify the stained land. It is terrible to see inscribed on this parchment the threats of punishment for disobeying the laws. The veil is snatched away from the future, and shows the terrible disasters which await the people and the king, if they continued in their present course. All the plagues which could bring humanity to despair are vividly described in this picture. On the one hand are deformity, starvation, drought and pestilence, humiliation and persecution, oppressive slavery and disgrace; on the other hand, madness and degradation.

This peculiar book of the Law, with its heartfelt exhortations and its gloomy prospect, which the

priest Hilkiah had found, was read by Shaphan, who carried it in haste to King Josiah, and read to him passages out of it. Terrified and shaken by the threats of punishment, and crushed by a feeling of his sin in hitherto permitting errors so plainly depicted in the newly-discovered book, the king in his despair tore his garments and was quite beside himself. He sent for the high priest Hilkiah to counsel him. On his suggestion, King Josiah sent him and some of his officers to the prophetess Huldah, wife of Shallum the overseer of the wardrobe, one of the royal officers. She announced to the king that the impending misfortune should not descend on him and his people in Josiah's days, as he had repented of his former ways.

Comforted as to the fate of his people during his own reign, King Josiah pursued the task of regenerating their condition with great energy. He took the newly-discovered book of the law as his guiding principle, and was far more severe and thorough than Hezekiah in his mode of uprooting idolatry. He first summoned all the elders of the people from the capital and the country, as also the entire population of the capital, the priests and prophets and even the humblest woodcutter and water-drawer of the Temple, and had the contents of the law book read to them. He, meanwhile, stood during the reading on a pulpit which had been brought for the king's use into the Temple. For the first time the entire nation of Judah was informed of its duties, its hopes and prospects according as it obeyed or disobeyed the laws. The king proposed to formulate a bond by which all present should be obliged to carry out with heart and soul the laws and ordinances which had been read to them. Then the words were loudly proclaimed, "May all those be cursed who depart from this law," and all present said "Amen." The king commanded the high priest

Hilkiah, the priests of the second order, who had to watch over the Temple, and the Levitical guardians of the Temple gates, to cleanse it from the various forms of idol worship. Thus the disgraceful figure of Astarte, the altars and cells of the Temple prostitutes, also all articles belonging to the worship of Baal and Astarte, the sun-horses at the entrance of the Temple, and lastly the altars for the worship of the stars were all set aside, crushed and burnt in the vale of Kidron and the ashes cast over the graves of the dead. The altar in the vale of Hinnom, where children were sacrificed, was desecrated by order of the king. All the chief altars throughout the country were destroyed. This was continued as far as Bethel, where the Cuthæans, who had settled in the place, and the remnant of Israel still had their sanctuaries, and as far as those towns which had formerly belonged to Samaria. The priests were deprived of their idols and altars, those of Levitical descent were obliged to remain in Jerusalem, where they could be under supervision, but though not allowed to offer sacrifices, they received their part of the tithes of the Aaronites. The foreign priests were partly or entirely displaced, and probably sent out of the country. Josiah made a cruel exception of the Israelite priest in Bethel who had continued the worship of the bull which had been introduced by Jeroboam and which had caused the perversion of the nation. This priest was killed on one of the altars, and the latter were desecrated by human remains. The king determined to make a striking example of Bethel, the spot where the negation and neglect of God's ancient law had originated. The less guilty descendants had in this case, as in many others, to atone for their more guilty forefathers. The king himself commenced the desecration of the idolatrous altar at Bethel. He cleared away the various idol-worships

which had taken root and flourished at different times on Jewish ground, and he thus acted according to the precepts contained in the Book of Deuteronomy.

In the spring of the same year (621) Josiah summoned the entire nation to celebrate the feast of Passover in Jerusalem, according to the ordinances of the Law, and the nation willingly obeyed his mandate, having sworn to act according to the Law. This festival—celebrated for the first time by the mass of the nation—was rendered especially solemn by inspiring psalms, accompanied by the singing and harp-playing of the Levites. One psalm—which was apparently sung on that occasion—has been preserved. The choir of Levitical singers exhorted the Aaronites to praise the God of Jacob, reminded them of the persecutions they had undergone, of the deliverance from Egypt, and of the revelation at Sinai, and also admonished them to keep away from strange gods. They alluded to the exile of a part of the nation, and prophesied happy days for those who observed the Sinaitic law. (Psalm lxxxi.) Josiah's energetic action against idolatry appeared so important an event to the faithful portion of the people that the prophets dated a new epoch from that time. The horrors of idolatry, with its terrible effects, which had so demoralised the nation for seven decades, had suddenly disappeared, owing to the zeal of the king. Social conditions were doubtless also improved. It is probable that Josiah insisted on the enfranchisement of Hebrew slaves who had been six years in slavery, in accordance with the law which he had chosen as his guide. He no doubt also appointed unbiassed judges, who should secure justice to the poor and the helpless against those in power. Historical accounts assert of Josiah that no king before him ever returned so sincerely to God, and carried out the law of Moses so

strictly. In fact, Josiah appears also to have exerted himself energetically in political matters; he had the courage to assert himself even against Egypt.

At the outset of his prophetic career Jeremiah had announced a period of universal dispersion and decay, to be followed by a new constitution of things. This change began in the last years of Josiah's reign. The empire of Assyria, which had subjected so many nations to its yoke, was to be delivered over to total destruction, and in its place new empires were to arise. Media and Babylon, the nearest dependencies of Nineveh, avenged the crimes of which that city had been guilty in its proud treatment of its adherents. The adventurous Nabopolassar, of Babylon (625-605), had broken the last tie which bound his country to Assyria, and had made himself independent. Egypt also endeavoured to take advantage of the increasing weakness of Assyria. Here a daring king named Necho (Nekos Nekaii), son of Psammetich (the former restorer of Egypt's power), had ascended the throne. Necho assembled a great army, with the intention of conquering the district of the Lebanon as far as the Euphrates, and of humiliating Assyria. Having stormed the fortified Philistine city of Gaza, Necho advanced along the slope on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and purposed reaching the Jordan by the plain of Jezreel. Josiah, however, opposed his advance through this territory, which had formerly been in the possession of the Israelites. Hardly had Necho and his army reached the middle of the plain of Jezreel than the army of Judah barred his way at Megiddo. The Egyptian king is supposed to have assured Josiah that this campaign was not directed against the land of Judah, but against more distant territories. Notwithstanding this, Josiah compelled him to do battle. The result was disastrous to

the king of Judah, for his army was beaten, and he himself was dangerously wounded (608). His attendants brought the body of their beloved king to Jerusalem, and on his arrival there he breathed his last. When he was interred in the new mausoleum, men and women cried bitterly, and exclaimed, "Oh, king! oh, glory!" On the anniversary of the day, on which this last excellent king of the house of David had sunk pierced by arrows, a psalm of mourning was sung, composed by Jeremiah for the occasion. No king was more sincerely mourned than Josiah, for the unfortunate battle of Megiddo in the plain of Jezreel, was the turning point in the history of Judah.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### END OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH.

Effects of Josiah's Foreign Policy—Jehoahaz—Jehoiakim—Egyptian Idolatry introduced—The Prophets—Uriah the Son of Shemaiah—Jeremiah's renewed Labours—Fall of Assyria—Nebuchadnezzar—Baruch reads Jeremiah's Scroll—Submission of Jehoiakim—His Rebellion and Death—Jehoiachin—Zedekiah—Siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar—The Siege raised owing to the Intervention of Egypt—Defeat of the Egyptians—Renewal of the Siege—Capture of Jerusalem—Zedekiah in Babylon—Destruction of the Capital—Jeremiah's Lamentations.

608—586 B.C.

JOSIAH had expected to secure the independence of Judah, and by means of the intervention of Egypt to put a stop to the incursions of other powers. The very reverse of this happened: for his policy led to the subjection of his own people. In Jerusalem, where the king's death was bitterly mourned, no further steps were taken till the election of a new king had been decided on. Josiah had left three sons; the first born of whom was Eliakim, and the two younger sons, Shallum and Mattaniah. The father appears to have named Shallum, the son of his favourite wife, as his successor. In order to do honour to their deeply-mourned king, the people confirmed Josiah's choice, though Shallum was two years younger than Eliakim. On his accession he, according to custom, took a different name—that of Jehoahaz.

Matters had, however, come to such a pass that the will of the nation could no longer establish their king firmly, nor could the holy oil render his person sacred: the decisive word lay with another power. The king of Egypt, to whom the country

had become subject by the victory at Megiddo, had decided otherwise. Apparently, without troubling himself about Judæa, Necho had reached the district of the Euphrates by forced marches; had obtained possession of the territories of Aram or Syria, belonging to Assyria, and had taken up his residence in Riblah. Jehoahaz repaired thither to meet Necho to have his election confirmed by him, and at the same time to receive the land of Judæa from him as a tributary state. But the newly-elected king found no favour in the eyes of the Egyptian sovereign, who caused him to be put in chains and carried off to Egypt. He then named Eliakim King of Judah. Jehoahaz had only reigned three months.

Eliakim, or, as he was called after his accession, Jehoiakim (607-596), had to perform an unpleasant duty at the very commencement of his reign. Necho had imposed a heavy and humiliating tribute on the land of 100 khikars of silver and one khikar of gold, as a punishment on Josiah for having hindered his march through the country. There was no treasure at that time in the palace or Temple. Jehoiakim therefore commanded that all the wealthy should subscribe a part of their property, and caused these sums to be forcibly collected by his servants. Added to this humiliation was yet another evil. The nation, owing to the moral and religious improvement brought about by Josiah, and trusting in the predictions contained in the Law lately discovered, had hoped to have happier times, but now found themselves disappointed. The king who acknowledged God had fallen on the battle-field, and had been brought back dying to the capital: the flower of the Israelite army had been cut down, a royal prince lay in fetters, and the country had fallen into a humiliating bondage.

This change occasioned a turn in the tide of opinion, and was followed by a relapse. The entire

nation, and even the more enlightened amongst them, began to doubt the power of God, who had not fulfilled, or could not fulfil, the promises He had to a certain extent made to them. They became impressed with the idea that the idolatrous practices of the people which had existed during so long a period under Manasseh, would render them happier. They therefore returned to their evil ways, erected altars and high places on every hill and under every green tree. In Judah there were as many gods as there were towns. They specially worshipped the Egyptian goddess Neith, the Queen of Heaven. She was adored in Sais, the capital of King Necho; for had not this goddess assisted the Egyptian king in the victory he obtained? Images of gold and silver, of wood and stone, were again erected in the houses. The Temple itself was, as in Manasseh's time, once more desecrated by hideous idols. The most disgraceful feature of the change was that the sacrifice of children again prevailed, as in the days of Ahaz and Manasseh. In the beautiful Valley of Hinnom an altar was again erected, and weeping infants were ruthlessly offered up to Moloch, the first-born especially being selected for the sacrifice.

These idolatrous and immoral practices were accompanied by other sins and crimes—by vice, adultery, oppression of strangers, widows and orphans, by corruption of justice, untruth, dishonesty, usury and cruelty towards impecunious debtors, and murder. There was certainly a class which upheld the law, and which regretted the horrors of these crimes. But amongst the masses who gave themselves up to the perversions of idolatry and immorality, it was difficult for those who desired better things to give practical effect to their views. False prophets advocated wrong-doing and crime. King Jehoiakim, although he

may not actually have encouraged the revival of idolatry, at any rate permitted it, and whether from weakness, or from sympathy with them, did not dissociate himself from the others. The stern warnings of the prophets were unheeded by the king, his monitors being persecuted or slain.

The prophets of God had a heavy task in this time of decadence, and were subjected to persecution and ill-treatment. They paid but little heed to the dangers they incurred; they felt impelled to oppose fearlessly the moral and religious fall which was impending. At no period did there arise so many prophets as in the last two decades before the destruction of the Jewish kingdom. They addressed the nation, the princes, and the king daily, on every opportunity; they warned, roused, and threatened them, and prophesied their destruction, if the prevailing wickedness did not cease. The names of only four of these prophets have been preserved: Jeremiah, Uriah, Habakkuk, and Ezekiel. But the prophecies of others, who fought the battle against idolatry, have remained, though their names have not been recorded.

Of Uriah, son of Shemaiah, from the forest city (Kirjath-Jearim), nothing is known, except his tragical death. At the commencement of the reign of King Jehoiakim (between 607-604) he had prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem and the whole country, if the people did not give up their evil ways. When Jehoiakim was informed of this prophecy of evil, he dispatched messengers, in order to seize and kill its author. Meanwhile Uriah, having been secretly warned of his danger, fled to Egypt. Jehoiakim, however, was so enraged against him, that he sent one of his nobles to Egypt in order to demand his surrender. He was brought back to Jerusalem and beheaded there; his body being cast on the common burial-place of his people. This murder

of the prophet, instead of intimidating Jeremiah, seems to have confirmed him in his energetic action. With the accession of Jehoiakim and the commencement of the decadence of the nation to its former state of sin he began his work as a prophet, which had been in abeyance during the reign of Josiah. Jeremiah now, for the first time, comprehended the meaning of the words which had been addressed to him as a disciple in the first hours of his prophetic calling. "I have made thee as a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the king of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land." He was to remain firm and unmoved, and to meet fearlessly the impending persecutions. Acting on this idea, he prepared to announce the inevitable destruction, though his tender heart bled, and he often had to seek fresh courage in order to sustain himself agnaist his prophecies of danger. Jeremiah meanwhile had grown to man's estate; but he took no wife. He could not devote himself to household joys, whilst the shadow of approaching troubles darkened his soul. He went forth alone and in sadness. He could take no part in convivial pleasures, because the sins of the nation crushed in him all feelings of gladness.

Through one of his first addresses in Jehoiakim's reign he drew on himself the hatred of all zealous idolaters, and especially of the priests and false prophets. When the populace, at one of the festivals, had assembled to offer up sacrifices, he called to them,

"Thus saith the Lord God of Hosts: Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in peace. . . . Is this house, which is called by my name, to be a den of robbers? Behold even I have seen it, saith the Lord. . . . And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spake unto you rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not, and I called you and

ye answered not, therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust and unto the place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done unto Shiloh."

Hardly had Jeremiah finished these words than the priests and false prophets seized him, and said, "Thou shalt die—as thou hast prophesied that this Temple will become as that in Shiloh." A tumult arose in the courts of the temple, and some of the bystanders supported Jeremiah. This tumult induced some of the princes to repair from the palace to the Temple—amongst these was Ahikam, son of Shaphan—and others who belonged to the prophet's party. The princes immediately formed a court of justice at one of the gates of the Temple, and heard the accusation and defence. The priests and false prophets said, "This man deserves death, for he has prophesied destruction to the city and the Temple." A few of the elders spoke in favour of Jeremiah. Then the princes said to the angry priests and false prophets, "This man does not deserve death, for he has spoken to us in the name of our God." Through the exertions of his friends, and especially of Ahikam, Jeremiah was set free for the time. But the hatred of the priests and false prophets towards him raged the more fiercely, and they watched for an opportunity to attack him.

Meanwhile the doom of the Assyrian empire had been fulfilled. It fell ignominiously through the united exertions of Cyaxares of Media and Nabopolassar of Babylon. Nineveh, the giant city, fell after a long siege (605). The last king of Assyria, Sardanapalus, burnt himself in his citadel. In consequence of the downfall of Assyria, important changes occurred on the central scene of passing events. Media became the chief of the Assyrian possessions—Cyaxares took the lion's share, and gave to his ally, Nabopolassar, Babylon, Elymais, and the guardianship of the countries

on the western side of the Euphrates. King Nabopolassar, the other conqueror of Nineveh, did not long outlive his victory. He was succeeded by Nebuchadnezzar—a great warrior (604-561), and a wise, far-seeing statesman. He was by no means cruel, and only punished his enemies in order to render them harmless. Nebuchadnezzar strengthened his now enlarged kingdom internally, erected gigantic buildings, and established a system of navigation by means of canals. He then undertook a further scheme of conquest. Aramean Assyria, or Syria, which was split up into small districts, was subdued without much opposition. Next Phœnicia fell, and its king, Ithobal (Ethbaal) II. also became Nebuchadnezzar's vassal.

The mighty conqueror then, doubtless, offered Jehoiakim the alternative to pay him allegiance or to be crushed. On the other hand, the king of Egypt counselled him to resist firmly, and promised that he would send help. Judah once more fell into a condition similar to that in the days of Hezekiah, and became the battle field for the contest between two great Powers. A policy had to be resolved on, but whilst awaiting aid from Egypt, or a miracle, Jehoiakim and his counsellors delayed coming to a decision from day to day.

Amidst the general alarm a fast was proclaimed; in the ninth month, in the winter of 600, the whole nation was summoned to Jerusalem, and there entreated the Lord to avert the impending evil from the land. The nation in great excitement and fear as to what the future might bring on them, crowded to the Temple as though they would find security there. Jeremiah meanwhile commanded his faithful disciple, Baruch, to write down the prophetic exhortation which he had uttered years ago to the Chaldæans when all the nations around Judah, including themselves, had been reduced to a condition of subjection. After

Baruch had inscribed this address on a roll, Jeremiah commanded him to read its contents in front of the Temple in the presence of all the inhabitants of the capital and the entire country. The prophet himself was by some means prevented from attending, and therefore Baruch had to go in his stead. Baruch unwillingly undertook his task. In an open hall, in the upper court of the temple, he read out the contents of the scroll to the whole nation. The address made a deep impression on the people, confronted as they were with the impending danger of an attack from Nebuchadnezzar's army, which now stood but a short distance from Jerusalem. A young man, Michaiah, son of Gemariah, hastened to the princes who had assembled in one of the halls of the palace, and there, agitated as he was, he communicated to them what he had heard. The alarmed princes called on Baruch to read again in their presence Jeremiah's scroll. Each word fell heavily on their hearts, and they were seized with terror. They therefore determined to acquaint the king with its contents, hoping that he, too, would be moved, and convinced that he must give up all opposition to Nebuchadnezzar. The princes repaired to the king, and informed him of what had occurred. In the first moments they hoped for the best, for Jehoiakim commanded that the scroll should be brought and read to him. As each leaf was read he took it and threw it into the fire. The princes witnessed his proceedings with dismay, and entreated the king not to act so as to draw down destruction on them. He, however, paid no heed to them, and continued to throw the pages into the fire until the whole scroll was consumed. Jehoiakim then issued an edict that the prophet of evil and his disciple should be sought in order that they might be killed as Uriah had been. Happily, the terrified princes had previously made

arrangements to save Jeremiah and Baruch by hiding them in a secure place where no one could find them.

It was, doubtless, a day of intense excitement for Jerusalem. The entire nation assembled for the fast, departed without having gained its end. The reading of the scroll had had one effect, it brought about dissensions amongst the princes. Those who were convinced by Jeremiah's prophecies and who contributed their aid to saving him, were determined to submit to Nebuchadnezzar, and amongst them was the Leader of the Lists (Sopher), Elishama, who directed the war arrangements. If he and other men of note were against war, Jehoiakim could hardly oppose them, for his throne was endangered. He therefore made peace with Nebuchadnezzar; paid the tribute imposed, promised him military aid, and undertook all the duties which at that time were imposed on a vassal. This was the commencement of the Chaldæan vassalage of Judah (600). Jeremiah could now leave his hiding place. Incensed as the king was against him, he dared not touch a hair of his head, for the princes who had saved him continued to protect him.

Jehoiakim meanwhile bore the Chaldæan yoke with great reluctance; he could no longer give reins to his passions. The king of Egypt, no doubt, continued to urge Jehoiakim to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar. When, therefore, Eth-baal II. of Phœnicia withdrew his allegiance to Nebuchadnezzar (598), Jehoiakim, with incomprehensible blindness, also refused to pay tribute, and allied himself with Egypt and also with Phœnicia. Nebuchadnezzar consequently had to collect all his forces against Egypt, and he commenced the siege of Tyre, which lasted thirteen years. He was therefore for the time being prevented from chastising the rebellious king of Judah, and the latter could give himself up to the delusion

that he had lastingly secured his independence. But though Nebuchadnezzar could not send a great army out against him, he nevertheless distressed the country by predatory inroads. Jehoiakim's successor was his young son Jehoiachin (Jeconiah—shortened into Coniah—) or rather the reins of government were taken in hand by his mother, Nehushta. Jehoiachin remained under the delusion that he could oppose Nebuchadnezzar, and therefore did not pay him homage. He also continued to practise the horrors of idolatry and immorality as his father had done. But these perversions of Jehoiachin and his mother lasted but a short time. Nebuchadnezzar at length succeeded in withdrawing a great portion of his army from the siege of Tyre. This Chaldæan army easily undertook the subjection of the entire country as far as the Egyptian river (Rhinokolura). The whole of Judah was also taken, with the exception of a few towns in the south, which had been fortified. Those who were not slain by the enemy were made prisoners. Notwithstanding this, Jehoiachin continued his opposition, thinking himself safe behind the thick walls of Jerusalem, relying besides on the support of Egypt in the event of a siege.

Nebuchadnezzar therefore sent some of his generals to besiege Jerusalem. Jehoiachin had no time to strengthen his fortifications, for the besiegers were gaining on him. He therefore commenced to arrange conditions for submission with the generals, when Nebuchadnezzar came to the camp, and was entreated by the king, the queen-mother and her court, to act with mercy. The victor, however, showed no mercy, but imposed hard conditions. Jehoiachin had to relinquish his throne—to go to Babylon into exile, together with his mother, his wives, his brethren, and eunuchs. He only occupied the throne of David for one hundred days. Nebuchadnezzar acted with clemency in sparing his life, and

in refraining altogether from bloodshed. He banished only ten thousand of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, taken indiscriminately from the various tribes, and transplanted them in Babylon, where they lived in the capital. Among them he also carried off a thousand mechanics who were skilled in forging arms and building fortifications. Of the Judæans who lived in the country he also led three thousand and twenty-three to Babylon as prisoners. That Nebuchadnezzar took possession of the treasures of the palace and the Temple was no special act of violence, but was justified by the military laws of those days. But he permitted the community to remain, spared the city and walls, and left the Temple uninjured. The first foreign conqueror of Jerusalem after its existence of five hundred years, showed greater mercy than many of the conquerors of later ages.

Nebuchadnezzar likewise permitted David's throne to exist, and placed on it the youngest son of Josiah, named Mattaniah, but who called himself Zedekiah. He was of a gentle, unwarlike and guidable character. The Babylonian conqueror thought that these qualities would be guarantees of peace and submission. In order, however, to be certain of Zedekiah as a vassal, Nebuchadnezzar entered into a solemn treaty with him and bound him by an oath of fealty. The land of Judah was to him merely an outpost of Egypt in the subjection of which he was continually engaged. For this reason he had sent into banishment the noble families and the princes of Judah, thereby removing the daring and obstinate men who might urge the king to ambitious schemes or rebellion. His object was to render Judah a weak, insignificant and dependent state, which should draw its strength from him.

Judah might, in fact, have continued to exist as a modest appanage of Babylon. It would soon

have recovered from the severe blows inflicted on it, though it was hard for the remnant which was left that the noblest families, the flower of the army and of the nation, should be in banishment; and though the capital and the country were filled with sorrow in consequence of their subjection, they nevertheless recovered themselves with wonderful rapidity, and again attained to a prosperous condition.

The nobles, however, were not satisfied with their modest condition; they wished for further scope. The nobles of the capital not only governed the people, but also the court. The kings were but of little account, for, in imitation of the custom of Sardanapalus, they lived in the harem of their palaces, and occupied their time with trifles. The nobles could the more easily assert themselves, as their king, Zedekiah, was swayed by a most unking-like weakness and indolence, and had not even the courage to withstand them. He was, however, of a good disposition, and does not seem to have particularly favoured idolatry, but rather to have regretted the national faults when they were brought under his notice, and to have given ear to the prophets. But he did not possess the power to oppose the nobles and their actions. Zedekiah may have intended to remain faithful to the oath of fealty which he had taken to his liege lord Nebuchadnezzar; but he had not the strength of will to adhere to his resolution. Rebellious schemes were secretly formed, of which he, in the seclusion of his palace, was ignorant, or, if cognisant of them, he was incapable of opposing them. This weakness on the part of the king, and daring on the part of the nobles, led to the fall of Judah. The nobles appear to have been seized with mad excitement. Suggestions were made in various quarters of rebelling against Nebuchadnezzar; Egypt, ever

false and deceitful—chiefly instigated them by making brilliant promises of alliance which it seldom kept. On the other side, King Ethbaal of Tyre urged upon Judah and the neighbouring countries the desirability of war with Nebuchadnezzar. On a third side, Judah was also urged to revolt against Babylon, namely, by the banished Judæans, who stood in constant communication with their native land by means of letters and messengers. They clamoured for war, because they nourished a vague hope that Nebuchadnezzar's army would be defeated, and they would, in one way or another, regain their freedom and return to their country. In the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign (593), the ambassadors from the countries which were simultaneously urging Zedekiah to break his word and faith, arrived in Jerusalem from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Zidon. They employed all the artifices of eloquence, and made promises and suggestions in order to bring the wavering monarch to a decision, urging that Judah should be proud to be thus sought after and courted, and might consider herself as the centre-point of political events.

It is not known what reply Zedekiah sent to the ambassadors. With his weak character, he would certainly not come to any definite decision. Jeremiah opposed the universal excitement, and it required no little courage on his part to do so. His prophetic spirit perceived that Nebuchadnezzar was destined to hurry through a course of victories, and to subjugate many nations to his sceptre. He, therefore, warned King Zedekiah that the nation and priests should not give themselves up to flattering hopes, but should submit to the Babylonian rule, or they would be crushed by the mighty conqueror. Jeremiah considered it as his prophetic calling to warn the deluded exiles in Babylon. He sent out a message telling them:

"Build ye houses and dwell in them; and plant gardens and eat the fruit of them; take ye wives and beget sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; and multiply ye there and be not diminished. And seek ye the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Let not your prophets that be in the midst of you, and your diviners deceive you, neither hearken ye to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely to you in my name: I have not sent them, saith the Lord. For thus saith the Lord, After seventy years be accomplished for Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." (Jeremiah xxix.)

But Zedekiah could not long resist the entreaty—the voices from within, the persuasions from without, from Egypt and the neighbouring countries, and the impetuosity of Judah's ambitious nobles. He permitted himself to be carried away by the stream, refused the tribute to Nebuchadnezzar, and thus, forgetful of his oath, he no longer acknowledged the vassalage of Judah (591). Thus the die was cast which was destined to decide the fall of the nation. At length the fatal hour arrived. Nebuchadnezzar, who for some time had remained passive, proceeded with his army to chastise the rebellious people like disobedient slaves. It appears that the surrounding nations who had first urged the revolt, were the first to submit. Judah was left entirely dependent on the assistance of Egypt, but even Egypt was afraid to carry its opposition into effect. It was, therefore, easy for Nebuchadnezzar to subdue the land of Judah and to occupy its fortresses in the south-west. Lachish and Azeka alone offered opposition. The Chaldæan army, however, left them unmolested, and proceeded against Jerusalem on the 10th day of the 10th month (at the end of 588 or beginning of 587). The capital of Judah had meanwhile been fortified and supplied with provisions and water for a long siege, but the inhabitants of the country having fled into the city at the approach of the enemy with their children

and herds, had increased the number of consumers. Zedekiah or his palace-officers, courtiers, and nobles having declined the invitation to submit, Nebuchadnezzar commenced a regular siege. The men of Jerusalem must have defended themselves bravely, for the siege lasted, with a short interval, for nearly a year and a-half (from January, 587, to June, 586). The leader of the besieged party was a eunuch in the service of King Zedekiah. The king himself played a passive part. He was neither commander of the troops, nor leader of any movement. His irresolution and weakness came forcibly to light in this time of trouble.

The siege of Jerusalem had made the task of Jeremiah a hard one. His feelings as a man and a patriot urged him, notwithstanding his advanced age, to take part in the defence and the war, in order to inspire the warriors with courage. His prophetic calling, and power of foresight on the other hand, compelled him to announce that the contest was in vain, and that the destruction of the city was decreed, on account of the blood which had been shed and the sins which had been committed. Freedom of speech could not at this period be denied him, as his name as a true prophet had been established by the events which had occurred. The nations of the North had set up their throne at the gates of Jerusalem, and had prepared to chastise its inhabitants.

When the siege of Jerusalem had lasted nearly a year, with the fortune of war in the distance probably constantly varying, a change suddenly took place. King Apries (Hophra) of Egypt at length determined to keep his often repeated promise, by sending an army against Nebuchadnezzar. This Egyptian army must have been a mighty one, for the Chaldæans, hearing of its approach, raised the siege of Jerusalem, and marched to oppose it (February or March, 586). The joy in Jerusalem was unbounded;

as the gates were at length opened, after being so long closed, the inhabitants hurried out to enjoy a sense of freedom. Hardly had the terrors of the siege abated, than various nobles and princes returned to their former ruthless ways. The slaves (male and female) who had been released were, notwithstanding solemn treaties and oaths, compelled to return to their former bondage and former degradation. Jeremiah was deeply angered at this cruelty and selfishness; he delivered a scathing address to the nobles and king, in which he dwelt on their sin, and announced that the Chaldæans would return, would capture Jerusalem, and that fire, war, hunger, and pestilence would rage amongst the people.

The princes of Judah had been greatly incensed against Jeremiah for his former opposition; but his last address excited even more violent hatred against him. As he was one day leaving the city to go to his birth-place Anathoth, he was seized by a spy, under the pretext that he was deserting to the Chaldæans. In spite of his assurance that he had no thought of flight, he was delivered up to the princes. Glad of an opportunity to revenge themselves on him, they treated him as a renegade, beat him, and put him in a cistern-cell (Adar, 586) in the house of Jonathan, the leader of the army, who, as a hard, heartless man was made his jailor. In this narrow, dirty, unhealthy place Jeremiah remained for several days.

The joy and delirium did not last long in Jerusalem. The Chaldæan army, which had marched against the Egyptian forces under Apries, utterly routed the enemy, and put them to flight. The power of Egypt was thereby greatly weakened, and Judah was now again left entirely to its own resources. The Chaldæans returned to the siege of Jerusalem, and surrounded it yet more closely than before, so as to bring the siege to an end. The courage of those

who were shut up in the capital began to fail. Many, anxious for their own safety, left the besieged city at open places, and went over to the Chaldæans, or fled to Egypt. King Zedekiah himself was fearful for the result, and saw too late that he had been guilty of folly in attempting to set himself up to cope with the Babylonian power.

Not alone had the war killed off many, but famine now increased the number of deaths. The number of warriors continued to decrease, and at last so few remained that they were unable to defend the walls. At length the last hour of Jerusalem struck, that city which even the heathen had considered impregnable. On the 9th Tamuz (June, 586) there was no more bread in the city, and in consequence of the utter exhaustion of the garrison, the Chaldæans succeeded in making a wide breach in the wall, by which they penetrated into the city. Nebuchadnezzar was not present; he was at Riblah, in Syria. The eldest of the Magi and others entered unmolested into the midst of Jerusalem, in order to pass judgment on the inhabitants. The Chaldæan warriors doubtlessly met with no opposition, as the inhabitants, reduced to skeletons by famine, could hardly move. They therefore spread over all parts of the city, killing youths and men who appeared capable of resistance, making prisoners of others and loading them with chains. The fierce warriors, rendered savage by the long siege, violated women and maidens irrespective of age. They also entered the Temple and massacred the Aaronites and prophets who had sought safety in the Sanctuary, amidst cries of anger, as if they wished to wage war with the God of Israel. The Chaldæans were accompanied by many of the neighbouring nations, the Philistines, Idumæans, and Moabites, who had joined Nebuchadnezzar. They pillaged the treasures and desecrated the Sanctuary.

Zedekiah with the remainder of the warriors had meanwhile succeeded in escaping at night into the royal gardens, and by a subterranean passage had reached the north-eastern part of the city. He sought in haste to reach the Jordan, but Chaldæan horsemen had hurried after the fugitives and blocked their way in the narrow passes. Weakened as they were, rather groping along than walking, they could be easily overtaken and made captive. In the city, the only dignitaries whom the troops found were the High Priest (Seraiah), the Captain of the Temple (Zephaniah), the Eunuch who had led the battle, the Leader of the Lists (Sopher), the confidants of the king, and about sixty other soldiers. They were all taken to Riblah, and there beheaded at Nebuchadnezzar's command. No one could remain in Jerusalem or its neighbourhood, as the air was rendered pestilential by the numerous corpses which lay unburied. Amongst the prisoners was the prophet Jeremiah. He was found in Mattara, in the king's palace, and was considered as a palace servant by the Chaldæan soldiers who made him prisoner. His disciple Baruch no doubt shared his fate. The generals appointed Gedaliah, a Judæan of noble birth, son of Ahikam, of the family of Shaphan, as overseer of the prisoners and fugitives.

The last hope fled from the unfortunate remnant of the nation when the news reached them that the king was taken. Zedekiah and his followers were overtaken at Jericho by the Chaldæan horsemen. Whilst the warriors who were with him fled at the approach of the enemy, and crossed the Jordan or took refuge in some hiding-place, Zedekiah, his sons, and some of his nobles were taken prisoners by the Chaldæans, and led to Riblah, before Nebuchadnezzar. He rightly poured out all his anger on the king for his violation of word and faith; but the punishment he inflicted on him was

sufficiently cruel. Nebuchadnezzar caused all Zedekiah's sons and relations to be executed before his eyes, and then had him blinded. Deprived of his sight and laden with chains he was taken to Babylon.

What was to be done with the city of Jerusalem? She had become a charnel-house, but was still standing. The generals who had captured her had not received instructions as to her fate. Nebuchadnezzar himself appears at first to have been in doubt about it, but at last he sent Nebuzaradan, the chief of his guard, with orders to destroy the city. The Idumæan nobles, filled with hate, immediately sought to make him complete the destruction without mercy (Psalm cxxxvii. 7). Nebuzaradan received orders to raze the walls, to burn the Temple, palace, and all the beautiful houses, and this order was conscientiously fulfilled, (10th Ab—August, 586). The treasures still remaining in the Temple, the artistically-worked iron pillars, the iron sea, the musical instruments, were all broken to pieces and conveyed to Babylon.

Jerusalem had become a heap of ruins, the temple mount a wilderness, but not one of the great capitals which fell from the height of glory into the dust has been so honoured in its destruction as Jerusalem. Poetry recorded her mournful fate in hymns, psalms, and prayers, in such touching tones that every tender heart must feel compassion with her even at this day. Poetry has wound a martyr's crown round her head, and this has become her aureole.

Jeremiah and one or two other poets composed four lamentations for the four stages of trouble which befell the city. The first lamentation deals with the time immediately after the capture of Jerusalem. The city still stood, the walls, palaces, and temple were not yet destroyed, but they were deprived of their inhabitants and their pleasures. This

lamentation chiefly deplores the desolation of Jerusalem, its greatest sorrow lies in the faithlessness of its allies, who now show pleasure at its fall. The second lamentation deplores the destruction of the city and its walls, and especially the fall of the sanctuary. The third lamentation bemoans the destruction of all that was noble through the famine, and the hopelessness which befell the survivors on the capture of the king. The fourth lamentation describes the utter desolation of Jerusalem after its complete destruction by the enemy.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DESTRUCTION.

The National Decay—The Fugitives—Enmity of the Idumæans—Johanan, Son of Kareah—The Lamentation—Nebuchadnezzar appoints Gedaliah as Governor—Jeremiah Encourages the People—Mizpah—Ishmael Murders Gedaliah—The Flight to Egypt—Jeremiah's Counsel Disregarded—Depopulation of Judah—The Idumæans make Settlements in the Country—Obadiah—Condition of the Judæans in Egypt—Defeat of Hophra—Egypt under Amasis—Jeremiah's Last Days.

586—572 B.C.

ABOUT a thousand years had passed since the tribes of Israel had so courageously and hopefully crossed the Jordan under their brave leader, and half that interval had elapsed since the first two kings of the house of David had raised the nation to a commanding position, to end thus. The greater part of the Ten Tribes had been scattered for more than a century in various unknown countries. The remaining tribes, composing the kingdom of Judah, had been overtaken by war, hunger, and disease, a very small number had been led away into captivity, and an insignificant few had emigrated or fled to Egypt, or lived in their own country in constant terror of the fate which the victors might have reserved for them. The numerous hosts of enemies, in fact, let loose their anger against these few, in order to complete their destruction, so that not a single Israelite might survive.

The remainder of the soldiers who had fled at night with Zedekiah from the ruined capital had dispersed at the approach of the Chaldæan soldiers. A handful, under the command of one of the princes

of royal blood, Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, had escaped across the Jordan, and had found shelter with the Ammonite king, Baalis. The rest had preferred to flee to Egypt, whither several families had already emigrated, because, as Hophra was an ally of their country, they hoped to receive his protection. But in order to reach it they had to touch the territory of Idumæa, and here a fierce unrelenting enemy awaited them. The Idumæans, mindful of their old hatred, and untouched by the brotherly advances of Judah, unsatisfied by the fall of Jerusalem and by the booty they had acquired, carried their enmity so far as to post a guard on the borders of their land for the purpose of killing the fugitive Israelites or delivering them up to the Chaldæans, with whom they wished to ingratiate themselves. It was not alone dislike, but also policy which prompted Edom to behave with cruelty to the miserable fugitives. They hoped to obtain possession of the entire territory, which had been in the hands of the people of Israel. The Idumæans loudly exclaimed, "Both the nations and both the kingdoms will belong to us" (Ezekiel xxxv. 10). The Philistines and all the neighbouring nations displayed both hatred and pleasure, and but few of the Israelite fugitives found refuge in the Phœnician cities. Phœnicia was too far from Judæa, and before the fugitives could reach it they were overtaken and killed by the Chaldæans.

The greater number of the chiefs and soldiers who had fled from Jerusalem with Zedekiah preferred remaining in their own country. They clung to the ground on which they had been born as though they could not leave it. At their head was Johanan, son of Kareah. But they had to seek hiding places in order to escape from the Chaldæans. They hid in the hollows, grottoes and caves of the mountains, or in the ruins of the fallen cities, and no doubt had to make raids

from their hiding places in order to seek provisions or to attack wandering Chaldæans or their adherents. These Judæans were often obliged to seek means for their miserable existence at peril of their lives. If they were caught they were condemned to an ignominious death and disgraceful treatment. The aged, who were of noble birth, were hanged, the young were condemned to carry mills from one place to another, or to other servile duties. In this fearful condition, which one of the psalmists shared with the rest, he composed a heartrending lamentation, the short verses of which sound like sobs and tears (Lamentations, ch. v.). For a short interval it seemed as if this miserable condition of the oppressed, this destructive war against the fugitives, would come to an end. Nebuchadnezzar did not wish Judah to be annihilated; but he determined to let the insignificant community remain in the land, though he did not wish a native king to be at their head. He therefore determined to appoint Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, over them as governor; his capital was to be Mizpah, which is an hour and a half's journey to the north-east of Jerusalem.

Nebuchadnezzar could not have made a better choice. Gedaliah was a man in every way fitted for meeting the difficulty of the position; he was gentle and peace-loving, having been to a certain extent the disciple of the prophet Jeremiah, of whom his father Ahikam had been the friend and protector. In order to heal the still bleeding wounds, a gentle hand was wanted, that of a man endowed with meekness and self-negation; Gedaliah was, perhaps, too gentle, or he reckoned too much on the good qualities of men. Nebuzaradan handed to him the more harmless of the prisoners, the daughters of King Zedekiah, as also many women and children, and the agriculturists, in all about a thousand persons. Nebuchadnezzar also

desired that the prophet Jeremiah should assist him; he therefore ordered Nebuzaradan to behave considerately to Jeremiah, and to be guided by all his wishes.

Nebuzaradan had proceeded from Jerusalem to Ramah, in the vicinity of Rachel's grave, in order to decide which of the prisoners and deserters should remain in their country, and which should be banished to Babylon. He loosened the bonds in which Jeremiah, like the other prisoners, had been bound, and offered him the choice of emigrating to Babylon, where he would be kindly treated, or of selecting any other dwelling-place, but he advised him to go to Gedaliah, in Mizpah.

Jeremiah, who had justly lamented having to see so much misery, had now to behold the grievous sight of the prisoners at Ramah, led in fetters to Babylon. Heart-rending were the cries of the unfortunate men, women, and children, who were being dragged away from their fatherland; Jeremiah endeavoured to comfort them (Jerem. xxxi. 14, seq.).

With a heavy heart Jeremiah, attended by his disciple Baruch, prepared to visit Gedaliah in Mizpah. He had not much hope of good from the small remnant of the more ignorant people, seeing that for forty years he had striven in vain amongst the nobles and educated classes. However, he had to submit. Nebuchadnezzar thought so highly of Jeremiah that he not only sent him presents, but his daily food. His presence in Gedaliah's immediate vicinity inspired those who had remained in the country with greater confidence in the future. The governor had announced that all those fugitives who would collect around him should remain unmolested and at peace in the cities, and should be permitted to cultivate their fields. Gradually the scattered tribes from Moab and the neighbouring countries who were not content in the

places they had colonised, joined Gedaliah and made a treaty with him; that is, they bound themselves to be faithful subjects of the Chaldæan king.

They cultivated the land, and not only grew corn, but also vines and figs; the ground became fruitful, and as the population was small, and the peasant gardeners and vine owners possessed a large portion of the land, they succeeded in obtaining rich harvests. Several towns arose out of the ruins; in Mizpah, Gedaliah erected a sanctuary, as Jerusalem and the Temple on the Mount were destroyed and only served as haunts for hyænas.

Mizpah thus again became a centre-point and a holy place. The half-Israelite, half-heathen colony of the Cuthæans of Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria recognised this sanctuary and made pilgrimages thither, offering sacrifices and incense. "The remnant of Judah" over whom Gedaliah had been placed, were reminded of their dependence on a Chaldæan ruler by the presence of the Chaldæan garrison. The latter not only kept watch over the nation, but also over the governor, in order that he might not engage in conspiracies. But considering the circumstances, and the fearful misfortunes which had befallen the country, this state of things was more endurable, or at least more favourable, than the people could have expected; they were, at any rate, in their own country. The military chiefs, who were weary of their adventurous lives in the mountains and deserts, and of their contests with the wild animals that infested the land, and the yet wilder Chaldæans, and who had relied on their swords and on delusive hopes, now determined to submit to Gedaliah. Johanan, son of Koreah, and his associates laid down their weapons, cultivated the fields, and built up cities upon the ruins which until now had served them as hiding-places.

The last to make peace was the leader Ishmael,

son of Nethaniah. Ishmael was a cunning and unprincipled man, and an evil spirit seems to have accompanied him to Mizpah, in order to disturb the comparatively favourable condition of the remnant of Judah. It is true that he made peace with Gedaliah and the Chaldæans, and promised submission; but in his heart he cherished anger and rage against both. Baalis, the king of Ammon, who had been opposed to the growth and development of a Judæan colony under Chaldæan protection, now instigated Ishmael to a crime which should put an end to it. The remaining captains, and especially Johanan, the son of Koreah, meanwhile received private intelligence of Ishmael's treacherous intentions towards Gedaliah. They, therefore, informed Gedaliah of the matter, placed themselves at his disposal, and entreated permission to put an end to the malefactor; but Gedaliah would not pay heed to their warning. This indifference, whether it owed its cause to a feeling of power or of weakness, was destined to prove fatal to him and to the newly-organised community.

It was about four years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the re-establishment of the scattered Judæans around their governor, that Ishmael, with ten followers, arrived in Mizpah to celebrate one of the festivals, and displayed great friendliness to Gedaliah. Gedaliah invited them to a banquet, and whilst the guests intoxicated by wine anticipated no evil, Ishmael and his followers drew their swords and killed the governor, the Chaldæans, and all men present who were capable of bearing arms. The remaining people in Mizpah, the old men, women, children, and eunuchs, he placed under the guard of his people, in order that his crime might not become known. Ishmael and his ten followers then carried off into captivity the inhabitants of Mizpah, for the

most part women and children, the daughters of King Zedekiah, as also the venerable prophet Jeremiah and his disciple Baruch, and took them across the Jordan to the Ammonites.

Meanwhile, secretly as he had performed his evil deeds, they could not long remain unknown. Johanan and the other chiefs had received information of what had happened, and were not a little indignant at being deprived of their protector and cast back into the uncertainties of an adventurous existence. They hurriedly armed themselves to punish the criminals as they deserved. The murderers were met at their first halting-place, at the lake of Gibeon, by Johanan and the others, who prepared to do battle with them. At sight of the pursuers the prisoners hurried to meet them, and it appears that a fray ensued, in which two of Ishmael's followers were killed. He, however, escaped with eight men, crossed the Jordan, and returned to the land of Ammon. This horrible attempt had succeeded, and the community had been broken up through the death of Gedaliah.

The survivors were at a loss how to act, being afraid to remain in their country, as it was probable that Nebuchadnezzar would not leave the death of the Chaldæans unavenged, even if he overlooked the murder of Gedaliah; but would, no doubt, punish them as accessories. Even had this fear been groundless, how could they remain in the country without a leader to unite the unruly chiefs. Their first thought was to emigrate to Egypt. The chiefs, with Johanan at their head, therefore directed their steps southwards. As they gradually became calmer they thought it would be more desirable to remain in their fatherland than to seek their fortune in a foreign country. It appears that the idea first suggested itself to Baruch, and that it was received with favour by some of the chiefs, whilst others were opposed to it.

Owing to this difference of opinion concerning the plan on which the weal and woe of so many depended, the leaders determined to leave the decision to Jeremiah. He was to pray to God, and entreat Him for a prophetic revelation as to the course they should adopt, calling on God to witness that they would abide by his word.

Jeremiah passed ten days in prayer before the divine revelation illumined his mind. During this time the feelings of the leaders had changed, and they had all determined on emigration. When Jeremiah had called together the chiefs and all the people, in order to inform them that the prophetic spirit had revealed to him that they should not be afraid of Nebuchadnezzar, he saw from their expression that they would receive this decision unwillingly. He therefore threatened them that should they insist on emigration, the sword which they so feared would surely destroy them; that none of them should ever again behold his fatherland, and that they would all perish from various plagues in Egypt. Hardly had Jeremiah ended his address, when Zephaniah and also Johanan called to him, "Thou announcest lies in the name of God; not He has inspired thee with these words, but thy disciple Baruch." Without further consideration the leaders proceeded on the way towards Egypt, and the entire multitude had to follow them.

Jeremiah and Baruch also had to join the rest, for they could do nothing in their deserted country. Thus they wandered as far as the Egyptian town of Taphnai (Tachpanches). They were kindly received by King Hophra, who was sufficiently grateful to show hospitality towards those whom his persuasions had brought to their present pitch of misery. There they met with Judæans who had emigrated earlier. Thus, more than a thousand years after the Exodus, the sons of Jacob had returned to Egypt, but under what changed cir-

cumstances! At that time they were hearty herdsmen, narrow in their views it is true, but pure and strong, and with hearts filled with hope. Their descendants, on the contrary, with torn hearts and disturbed minds, were far removed from their former habits, yet not sufficiently changed to merge themselves into the other races and disappear amongst them. Like all emigrants, they lived on buoyed up by false hopes, watching every political movement which might bring them an opportunity to return to their country, and there continue to live in their former freedom.

Meanwhile, Judæa was completely depopulated. Nebuchadnezzar was not inclined to treat the occurrences at Mizpah with indifference, involving as they did the murder of Gedaliah and the Chaldæans with him. He no doubt saw that it was an error to permit a weak Judæan community to exist, dependent, as it was, on one man. He, therefore, once more sent out the leader of his guards, in order to take revenge on the remaining Judæans. Nebuzaradan now met with no leader, in fact, with no man of importance, only the remaining agriculturists, gardeners, and owners of vineyards. These, with their wives and children, being seven hundred and forty-five persons in all, were led to Babylon (582) into captivity. This was the third banishment since Jehoiachin. The innocent, on this occasion also, had to suffer for the guilty. There is no historical record as to what happened to Ishmael and his fellow-conspirators. Gedaliah's name, on the other hand, remained in the memory of the survivors, on account of his violent death. The anniversary of his murder was kept in Babylon as a fast day. Nebuchadnezzar, from the time of Gedaliah's death, determined to leave no Judæan in the country, and Judæa remained depopulated and deserted. A later prophet laments over its utter desertion:

"The holy cities have become a waste, Zion a desert, Jerusalem also" (Isaiah lxiv. 9).

Thus the punishment which the prophet had predicted had been fulfilled. The land of Judah could now rest, and celebrate the Sabbatical years which had been neglected so long. In the south the Idumæans had acquired some tracts of land on the borders of Judah (with or without permission from the Babylonian king), and had extended their possessions as far as the slope (Shephela) of the Mediterranean Sea. The exiles therefore felt a bitter hatred against the Idumæans, who, in addition to plundering Jerusalem, and giving up the fugitives, had now seized on the land of their heritage. Two prophets, who had escaped from the massacre and the desolation, and lived amongst the exiles, gave expression to their painful feelings —namely Obadiah and an anonymous prophet. Both had predicted the dissolution of Edom, as a retribution for their conduct to the neighbouring tribes and Jerusalem.

Although the Judæans had been everywhere received with indifference, and their own country had become, to a certain extent, the property of the enemy, the refugees in Egypt still nursed the hope that they would soon return to their fatherland, and again inhabit it. The events of the war had kept alive this hope, but the venerable prophet Jeremiah roused them from their illusions. His heart prompted him to speak severely to the Egyptian Judæans, because they, unchanged by misfortunes, had once more devoted themselves in Egypt to the worship of the goddess Neith. Added to this hankering after strange gods, they yet, with incomprehensible blindness, clung to the name of Jehovah, and swore by Him. Jeremiah, for the last time before descending to his grave, desired to tell them that owing to their unconquerable folly they would never return to their fatherland. He

therefore summoned the Judæans of Migdol, Taphnai, Memphis, and Sais (?) to a general meeting at Taphnai. He still possessed sufficient influence to ensure their obeying his summons. He put the case before them in plain language. Their idolatrous practices, however, were so dear to their hearts that they openly boasted of them, and told the prophet that they would not relinquish them. The women were the most daring:—"The oath which we have taken to offer up sacrifices and offerings of wine to the queen of heaven, shall be kept as we and our fathers were formerly accustomed to do in the cities of Judæa and in the streets of Jerusalem. At that time we had bread in plenty, we were happy, and misfortunes were not before us. Since we have left off making sacrifices to the queen of heaven we are in want, and die by the sword or through hunger." Jeremiah answered their blasphemy: "Fulfil your oaths; all the men of Judah will surely die in the land of Egypt; only a few fugitives from the sword shall return from Egypt into the land of Judah. They shall learn whose word shall endure—mine or yours." As a sign, he predicted that king Hophra, on whom they depended, would fall into the hands of his enemy, as Zedekiah had fallen into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. The announcement that Hophra would meet with a disastrous end was fulfilled. In a warlike expedition against Cyrene, his army was defeated, and his warriors, jealous of the Carians and Ionians, whom he favoured, rebelled against him. An Egyptian of low caste, Amasis (Amosis), placed himself at the head of the rebels, conquered Hophra, dethroned him, and caused him to be strangled (571–70). This new Pharaoh, who used all care in order to ingratiate himself with the Egyptians and induce them also to favour the Greeks, took no interest in those Judæans who had settled in Egypt. They were neglected, and their

dream of returning to their fatherland (through the help of Egypt) was destroyed. Jeremiah seems to have lived to see this change.

His tender heart must have become yet sadder in his old age, as he could not succeed in "taking good from out of the evil." The few Judæans who were around him in Egypt remained firm in their folly and hardness of heart. But Jeremiah's care was not in vain. The seed which he had sown grew up plentifully on another ground, carefully tended by his prophetic disciples. His office, not only to destroy, but to rebuild and plant anew, was carried on in other circles. His disciple Baruch, son of Neriah, appears to have left the exiles in Egypt for those in Babylon, after the death of the prophet of Anathoth.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE BABYLONIAN EXILE.

Nebuchadnezzar's treatment of the Exiles—The Exiles obtain grants of land—Evil-Merodach favours Jehoiachin—Number of the Judæan Exiles—Ezekiel's activity in the first period of the Exile—Moral change of the People—Baruch collects Jeremiah's Prophecies and compiles the Histories—The Mourners of Zion—Proselytes—The Pious and Worldly Parties—The Poetry of the Time—Psalms and Book of Job—Nabonad's Persecutions—The Martyrs and the Prophets of the Exile—The Babylonian Isaiah—Cyrus captures Babylon—The Return under Zerubbabel.

572—537 B.C.

WAS it by chance, or was it by a special design, that the Judæans, who were banished to Babylon, were humanely and kindly treated by the conqueror Nebuchadnezzar? Is there actually in the history of nations, and in the chain of events, such a thing as chance? Can we affirm positively that the condition and state of nations would be quite unlike what they now are, if this or that circumstance had or had not existed? Can we believe that, whilst the strictest or most binding laws govern all things in the kingdom of nature, the history of nations should be the result of mere caprice? Nebuchadnezzar's kindly treatment of the people of Judah was of great importance to the continuous advance of the history of that nation. And this kindliness secured the preservation of the small band of exiles, whose numbers were greatly diminished by their successive misfortunes. Nebuchadnezzar was not like those ruthless conquerors of earlier and later days, who took pleasure in wanton destruction. The desire to establish, and to accomplish great works was as dear to his heart as conquest itself. He wished

to make the Chaldæan kingdom great, populous and rich. His capital, Babylon, was to surpass the now ruined Nineveh. He built a wall round his city, which was nine miles in circumference, and he added a new town to the old one, on the eastern side of the river Euphrates. The conquered people, taken forcibly from their own homes, were transplanted into this new city, whilst domiciles were given to many Judæan captives in the capital itself, those in particular being favoured who had freely accepted Nebuchadnezzar's rule. In fact, so generous was his treatment that entire families and communities from the cities of Judæa and Benjamin, with their kindred and their slaves, had the privilege of remaining together. They were free, and their rights and customs were respected. But the families transplanted from Jerusalem—such as the princes of the royal house (the sons of David), the descendants of Joab, or the family of Pahath-Moab, the family of Parosh—were united as one whole, under their own government, according to the traditions of their own family. Even the slaves of the Temple (the Nethinim) and the slaves of the State, who had followed their masters into exile, lived grouped together according to their own pleasure.

Most probably the exiles received land and dwelling-places in return for those which they had forfeited in their own country. The land divided amongst them was cultivated by their servants. They not only possessed slaves, but also horses, mules, camels, and asses. As long as they paid taxes for their lands and their possessions, and obeyed the laws of the king, they were permitted to enjoy their independence. They maintained a mutual intercourse of the closest description, which was strengthened by the hope (no uncommon one to exiles) that their return to their own country would surely be brought about by some unforeseen event.

One other circumstance greatly helped them. In the Chaldæan kingdom the Aramaic language predominated. It was the twin sister to the Hebrew. Thus the exiles learnt it easily, and could soon make themselves understood by the inhabitants. Even in those days the Judæans possessed a peculiar facility for acquiring foreign languages. The position of the Judæans in Babylon after the death of Nebuchadnezzar (561) was still more favourable.

Nebuchadnezzar's son and successor, Evil-Merodach (Illorodamos) was utterly unlike his father. He had neither the courage of a warrior nor a love of warfare, and he cared little for the business of the State. Judæan youths, from the royal house of David, were to be found at his court and of them he intended to make eunuchs. How often have these guardians of the harem, these servants of their master's whims, become in their turn masters of their master. The king Evil-Merodach appears to have been under the influence of a Judæan favourite, who, no doubt, induced him to release the captive King Jehoiachin, who had been imprisoned for thirty-seven years. The Babylonian monarch clothed him in royal garments, invited him to the royal table, and supplied his wants most generously. When Evil-Merodach held his court with unusual pomp, and assembled all the great men of the kingdom about him, he raised a throne for Jehoiachin higher than the thrones of the other conquered kings. He wished all the world to know that the former king of Judæa was his particular favourite.

This generosity of Evil-Merodach must have extended in some degree to Jehoiachin's former subjects, for to many of them greater freedom was given, whilst others, who had been kept in the strictest captivity on account of their hatred to Nebuchadnezzar, were released. In fact, Evil-Merodach might have been persuaded to allow

the exiles to return home, with Jehoiachin as king of Judæa, had not his own death intervened. After a short reign of two years, he was murdered by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar (560). The dream in which some Babylonian Judæans had indulged (that of returning to their own country) was thus dispelled. They were soon to learn the hardships of captivity.

One of the many prophecies of the Hebrew seers —namely, that only a small part of the people should be saved—had been fulfilled. Insignificant indeed was the remnant. Of the four millions of souls which the children of Israel numbered in the reign of King David, only about a hundred thousand remained. Millions had fallen victims to the sword, famine, and pestilence, or had disappeared and been lost in foreign lands. But there was yet another side to the prophecies which had to be realised. The greater number of the Judæan exiles, particularly those belonging to the most distinguished families (in spite of the crushing blow which had befallen their nation and their country), remained hardened in their obstinacy and wilful perversion. They still clung in Babylon to the idolatry which they had followed in their own country. It was difficult indeed to root out the passion for idolatry from the hearts of the people. The heads of the families, or the elders, who laid claim to a kind of authority over all the other exiles, were as cruel and as extortionate in Babylon as they had been in Palestine. Regardless of those beneath them, they did not try to better their condition. They chose the best and most fruitful portions of the lands offered to them, leaving the worst to their subordinates.

Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, the first prophet of the captivity (born about 620, died about 570) directed his prophetic ardour against the folly and obstinacy of the exiles. Gifted with a simple, yet fiery and

impressive eloquence, with a sweet and impassioned voice, and fully conscious of the highest ideal of religion and morality that the Judæans were capable of attaining, he spoke with courage and energy to his fellow exiles. At first they treated him roughly (actually fettering him upon one occasion), but at last he gained their attention, and they would gather round him when he prophesied.

The elders had often entreated him to foretell the end of that terrible war whilst it was raging in and about Jerusalem, but he had been silent. Why should he repeat for the hundredth time that the city, the nation, and the Temple were to be inevitably destroyed? But when a fugitive announced to him that the threatened misfortune had become a reality, he broke silence. Ezekiel first addressed himself to the unconscientious and heartless elders, who were leading a comfortable existence in captivity, whilst they were ill-treating their unfortunate brethren. He began by preaching against idolatry; then he attempted to combat a false idea prevailing amongst the exiles. Like the rest of the prophets, Ezekiel had foretold with great precision the ultimate return of the Judæans to Palestine, and also their return to a purer state of morality. Many of the captives, however, in consequence of their repeated misfortunes, began to despair of this return, and looked upon it as a mere dream. They said, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost: we are clean cut off." When a nation despairs of its future and loses all hope, there is much to be apprehended. Ezekiel considered it his most important duty to banish this gloom from the hearts of his people. In a beautiful simile—that of the dry bones restored to life—he placed before them a picture of their new birth.

But there was yet another group of exiles who despaired of the restoration of the Judæan people. They felt themselves utterly crushed by their sins.

For centuries the nation had tempted the anger of its God by idolatry and other misdeeds. These sins could not be passed over, for sin would surely lead to its usual result—the death of the sinner. It was then that these unfortunate people exclaimed, "If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how then should we live?" But the prophet Ezekiel also fought against this gloomy belief, that sin and its punishment were inseparably connected, and that crime must necessarily lead to the death of the sinner. In eloquent words, he laid before the people his consolatory belief in the efficacy of repentance.

Often and in varied terms Ezekiel spoke of the future deliverance of the exiles, and painted it in ideal colours. So deeply was this prophet of the Exile impressed with the certainty of a return to the old order of things in his own country, that he actually devised a plan for the building of a new Temple, and for the ordering of divine service and of the priesthood. Ezekiel was far from thinking that such a brilliant and glorious future was near at hand. The ideas, the feelings, and the actions of the exiles with whom he came into daily contact were not of a kind to justify such a hope. But he and other holy men helped to make a small beginning. After the death of Ezekiel and Jeremiah an imperceptible change for the better commenced. In spite of the kind treatment at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar and his son, the captivity, with its unhappy results, as also the influence of prophetic literature, led to a change in the disposition of the people. In the very midst of the idolatrous abominations of the kingdoms of Ephraim and Judah, the flowers of a higher morality had blossomed. "The Spirit of God had dwelt amidst the uncleanliness of the people." The sublime thoughts of the prophets and the psalmists, awakened during

the course of centuries, had not vanished into thin air with speech and song, but had taken root in some hearts, and had been reproduced in writing. The priests of the sons of Zadok, who had never been idolatrous, had brought with them into captivity the Law, the Pentateuch; the disciples of the prophets brought the eloquent words of their teachers; the Levites had brought the sublime Psalms; the wise men, a treasure of excellent sayings; the learned had preserved the historical books. Other treasures had been lost, but one treasure remained which could not be stolen, and this the exiles had carried into a strange land. A rich, brilliant, and manifold literature passed into exile with them, and had become a power that taught and ennobled. This literature was the cause of some really marvellous consequences. Had not the prophecy been realised to the letter, that the land of Israel would thrust her people away on account of their folly and their crimes, just as she had thrust away the Canaanites? Had not the terrible threats of the prophets come to pass in a most fearful manner? Jeremiah had prophesied daily, in words of the clearest import, the destruction of the nation, the city, and the Temple. Ezekiel had foretold the terrible war and subsequent misery, and his words had been fulfilled. In a yet loftier strain, Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Moses had warned the people that exile and destruction would follow upon the transgression of the Law.

But in spite of all their terrible misery, the people were not entirely annihilated. A remnant existed, small indeed, and homeless, but this remnant had found favour in the eyes of the conquerors. They felt convinced that even in the land of their foes God had not cast them down. He did not utterly abhor them, nor destroy them, so as to break His covenant with them. A part of the descendants of the Ten Tribes, scattered for more

than a century in the Assyrian provinces, and looked upon as lost, had asserted their nationality, and had approached their suffering brethren with cordial affection. They had formerly been separated from them by jealousy and hatred, which had been constantly kept alive. The Israelites, who had previously dwelt in the capital of Nineveh, had without doubt left that doomed city at the destruction of the Assyrian Empire, and had fled to Babylon, the neighbouring kingdom. Thus the words of the prophets were again fulfilled, "Israel and Judah shall dwell together in brotherly love." Yet another miracle was performed before the eyes of the people.

Those who were able to read, eagerly studied the rescued manuscripts, and anxiously sought instruction and consolation in their pages. The prophecies and words of Jeremiah were especially studied, their pathetic and elegiac tone being peculiarly adapted to men living in exile. Jeremiah's manuscript, which, as we said before, was probably brought by Baruch from Egypt, became a popular book. The effect which the living words, fresh from the prophet's own lips had failed to produce, was accomplished by the written letter. The spirit of the prophets passed into the soul of their readers, filled them with hope, and prepared them for change.

In order to make the improvement more lasting, the spiritual leaders of the people chose a new method of instruction. One of them, probably Baruch, wrote (about 555) a comprehensive historical work for his readers, containing a long series of events, from the creation of the world and the commencement of Israel as a nation, down to the time when Jehoiachin was released from his prison and loaded with marks of the royal favour. This collection embraced: the Thorah (Law), the Book of Joshua, the History of the Judges, of Samuel,

Saul and of David. To these Baruch added the History of the Kings from Solomon until Jehoiachin, whose downfall he himself had witnessed. He gave his own colouring to these events, as he was anxious to demonstrate that the decline of the kingdom, from the death of Solomon, was owing to the apostasy of the king and the people.

The historical work that Baruch compiled has no equal. It is simple, yet rich in matter and instructive, unaffected yet artistic; but above all things it is lively and impressive. It was the second popular work of the Babylonian exiles, and they not only read it with interest, but they followed it, cheered and strengthened. Levitical scribes applied themselves to copying it. This literature gave new heart to the people, and breathed a new spirit into them. What Ezekiel had commenced, Jeremiah's disciple, Baruch, continued.

Fired by the study of these writings, the exiles began to devote themselves to self-examination. This was followed by contrition for their constant disobedience and idolatry. Those who were moved to penitence by the consciousness of their great sins, longed to wash away the bitter past in tears of repentance. They acknowledged that all the misfortunes that had befallen them were well deserved, for "the Lord of Hosts thought to do unto us," they said, "according to our ways and according to our doings, so hath He dealt with us." Many atoned sincerely, four days in the year were set apart, at first by a few, and later on by a large number of exiles, as days of mourning. These occasions were the anniversaries of Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem in the tenth month, of the conquest of Jerusalem in the fourth month, of the destruction of Jerusalem in the fifth month, and of Gedaliah's assassination in the seventh month. At these times it became cus-

tomary that the people should fast and lament, wear garments of mourning, sit in ashes and bow their heads, as if they were crushed with sorrow. The observance of these days of mourning was the first symptom of the people's regeneration, it was a sign of repentance, and was the first institution of national anniversaries after the captivity. This keen feeling of remorse gave birth to a new kind of Psalm, which we may call the Penitential Psalm. Those who had forsaken their evil ways, in their turn converted others; former sinners showed other evil-doers the way to God. The number of the faithful, "those who were eager for God's word," those "who sought after God," thus gradually increased. Naturally, those who had suffered in exile, formed the nucleus of this gathering. They mourned the destruction of Jerusalem and its former glory; they were "contrite in heart," and "meek in spirit." They bore outward signs of mourning, and called themselves "the mourners of Zion." With them were associated members of noble families, who held some office or dignity at Court. All their thoughts dwelt upon Jerusalem. They loved the stones of the Holy City and longed to see its ruins, although they were lying in the dust. The Levite, who in the name of his companions in captivity, described so poetically this faithful remembrance of Jerusalem, gave utterance in the 137th Psalm to the general feelings of "the mourners of Zion."

During the prayers for deliverance and the acknowledgment of their sins, the mourners turned their faces towards Jerusalem, as if the place where the Temple once stood were still holy, and as if a merciful answer would come thence to their supplications. As those who were eager for God's word would not offer up sacrifices in a strange land, they accustomed themselves to look upon

prayer as a substitute for sacrifice. Three times a day, a number of persons forming a congregation, met for this purpose. The House of Prayer took the place of the Temple. Probably the penitential Psalms and the Psalms of mourning were first recited in these Houses of Prayer.

The burning enthusiasm for Jerusalem, for the deliverance from captivity, and for the prophetic teaching, was fanned to a yet higher flame by the astounding fact that some of the heathen population accepted the doctrines of the exiles, and entered into their covenant. The enthusiasm of the exiles must have effected this wonderful phenomenon. Zeal of a self-sacrificing, self-forgetting nature, kindles a like ardour in others, and often produces great results. It was comparatively easy, by placing the Judæan doctrine of one sublime, spiritual God in opposition to the childish image-worship of the Chaldeans, to make the latter appear ridiculous. The Judæan, fully conscious of the majesty of his God, could ill restrain his derision, or withhold a smile of contempt, at the sight of a Babylonian workman carving an image out of wood, praying to it for help in adversity, and then out of the residue of the material kindling a fire, at which he warmed himself, or over which he baked his bread and cooked his meat. In this way many who heard of the great name of the God of Israel, forsook their own false belief and associated themselves with a people who professed a totally different religion. These newly-won proselytes kept the Sabbath after their conversion, followed the Law and even submitted to the rite of circumcision. This, the first conquest attained by the exiles during the Captivity, exercised a reflex influence upon the Judæans. They began to love their God and their Law with far greater fervour as soon as they discovered that heathens had been won to their side. This re-

generation was effected before two decades had elapsed after the death of the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

The manuscripts, consisting of the Thorah and the Prophets, which had become accessible to the exiles, were a fountain of rejuvenescence, refreshing the spirit and softening the heart. Meanwhile this new spirit, by which the nation was inspired, had to be tried, and tested, and the hour of probation was at hand.

Some of the most distinguished families amongst the Judæans adhered to their old perversity, and adopted many of the errors of their heathen neighbours. The giant capital of Babylon and the far-spreading Chaldean empire, had a peculiar charm for those "who stood highest" among the exiles. They were tempted into imitating some of the Chaldean customs, for they saw a wide horizon opening before them, which gave them an opportunity of developing their powers. Commerce flourished in Babylon, and the products of the soil and the beautifully-woven textures of the country were eagerly sought after, and were largely exported. Thus the merchants of Judah, who had already been accustomed to commerce, were able, not only to continue their calling, but also to follow it more actively. They even undertook journeys for the purpose of buying and selling, and began to accumulate great riches. In a luxurious country wealth produces luxury. The rich Judæans imitated the effeminate life of the Babylonians, and even began to profess the idolatrous beliefs of Babylon. In order to ensure the success of their undertakings, they actually prepared a table with food for the God of Good Fortune (Gad), and filled the pitcher of wine for the God of Fate (Meni). So completely were the wealthy exiles incorporated with the Babylonians, that they entirely forgot Judah and Jerusalem, which until lately had been

the goal of their desires. They could not bear to think of their return, they wished to be Babylonians, and looked with contempt upon the fanatical lovers of their own land. The two rival parties, which cordially hated one another, were represented on the one hand by men of zeal and piety, and on the other by men of worldliness and self-indulgence. The earnest-minded Judæans, who were full of fervour for their cause, attempted to influence their brethren, whose religious views and conduct were so widely opposed to their own. This appears in the prophetical writings. The last twenty years of the Captivity were yet more eventful than the times of Hezekiah. The men of genius, disciples of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who had mastered the old Hebrew characters, and who had studied the precious national manuscripts, now began to compose in their turn. An apparently inexhaustible fountain of poetry flowed once more in a strange land, in the very midst of the sufferings of captivity. The Hebrew language, so lovingly fostered by the exiles in their Aramaic home, was the language of their poetic works. Psalms, proverbs, and prophecies followed rapidly one after the other. An author of that time collected a number of proverbs, written at a much earlier date, and in the preface that he affixed to them gave a true picture of the age. He was an acute observer of human failings and their consequences, and his work was full of wise maxims. If he could but bring the worldly-minded to listen to his teaching, then, he argued, they might be induced to abandon their evil ways. The epitome of this Book of Proverbs is that, "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God, and the fear of God the safeguard of wisdom. Sin is folly, and occasions the death of the sinner. Even the prosperity of fools kills them, and their happiness destroys them. But

what reward is there in store for the pious or for the wise who suffer?"

The compiler of these proverbs could only repeat as the psalmist did in Babylon to the people of the Captivity, "The just will inhabit the land again, and the pious shall dwell in it once more." But if these words sufficed for the God-fearing people and the mourners of Zion, they were not sufficient to comfort and satisfy the weak in faith, still less could they alter the opinion of those who had forgotten the Holy Hill and whose hearts clave to Babylon. For it was evident that the sinners enjoyed prosperity, and that those who feared God and remained true to their ideals were often unhappy and unfortunate. This discord in the social order of their world demanded a satisfactory explanation. Doubts arose as to the justice of God, and as to the truth of the teachings of the fathers, and these misgivings were bitterly felt by the Babylonian Judæan community.

A poet undertook the solution of these difficult questions, and he created a work of art, one of the most perfect ever conceived by a human mind. This unknown author composed the book of Job, a work which was to bring light into the gloomy thoughts of his contemporaries. It was also intended to convey instruction, but its method was different from that of the Psalms and the Proverbs. In a serious and most interesting conversation between a group of friends, the question that divided the Babylonian community and kept its members at variance was to be brought to a decision. The author did not allow this dialogue to be carried on in a dry and pedantic way, but he made it singularly attractive in form, expression, and poetical diction. The story of the patient Job is the groundwork of the dialogue, and it is interesting from beginning to end. The arrangement of the poem is artistic through-

out; the opinions that the author wishes to propagate are allotted to different speakers. Each person in the dialogue has a distinct character and remains true to it. In this way the dialogue is lively, and the thoughts that it contains command attention.

Meanwhile events took place in Babylon and the rest of Asia that were ultimately to change the fate of the exiles. Neriglissar, the successor of the friendly king Evil-Merodach, was dead, and had left a minor to succeed him. But this young prince was killed by the Babylonian nobles, one of whom, named Nabonad, seized the throne (555). A few years previous to that date, a Persian warrior, the hero Cyrus, had dethroned the Median king, Astyages, attacked his capital, Ecbatana, and conquered the provinces belonging to the king of Media.

The pious and zealots among the Babylonian Judæans did not fail to recognise in these events favourable signs for themselves. They appear to have entreated Nabonad to free them from captivity, and to permit them to return to Judæa. They may have confidently relied upon the realisation of their wishes, as Merbal, a noble Phœnician exile of the royal house, had been permitted by Nabonad to return to and rule over his own country, and after his death, his brother Hiram was allowed to succeed him. It was not improbable, therefore, that Nabonad would confer the same favour upon his Judæan subjects. Shealtiel, the son of King Jehoiachin may have urged this request upon the usurper, and the Judæan favourites at the Babylonian Court may, very probably, have warmly espoused his cause. But Nabonad was as loth for the exiles to leave Babylon as Pharaoh had been of old for the Israelites to leave Egypt. This frustration of their hope, or rather this delay to their wishes, incited a burning hatred of Babylon and its monarch in

the patriotic exiles. The old wounds burst open anew. Babylon was loathed as Edom had been in former ages. Such violent hatred could not be controlled, but found expression in speech and action. The speedy downfall of the hated country, teeming as it did with idolatry and immorality, was anxiously expected by the Judæans. They followed with interest the warlike progress of the hero Cyrus, because it seemed to them that a conflict was imminent between the kingdom of Media-Persia, and Babylon. Cyrus had directed his weapons against the Lydian kingdom of Crœsus, who had made an offensive and defensive alliance with Nabonad of Babylon, and Amasis, king of Egypt. These monarchs were well aware that they, in their turn, would be attacked, and they tried to gain strength by alliance. But this only incited the Persian conqueror to destroy the independence of Babylon all the sooner. Did any of the Judæan favourites at the Babylonian Court, or any of the converted heathens maintain secret negotiations with Cyrus? The kindness shown later on to the Judæans by the Persian warrior, and the persecution that Nabonad carried on against them, implies that this may have been the case.

Nabonad's persecutions were first directed against the patriotic and pious exiles, who were threatened with severe punishments which were cruelly put into execution. It seemed as if the very kernel of the nation was to be proved and tried, as Job had been, by suffering. Upon some, heavy labour was imposed, from which even the aged were not exempt. Others were shut up in dungeons, or were robbed, beaten, and insulted. Those who dared to speak of their speedy deliverance through Cyrus were doomed to a martyr's death. The persecuted bore their sufferings patiently, and submitted bravely to martyrdom.

A contemporary prophet, who witnessed the per-

secution, and who may have been one of its victims, described it in harrowing words. It was to him as if the whole nation had suffered; and he speaks of the terrible anguish of those who were persecuted, as if they were represented by one man:—

"He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . . . He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment." (Isaiah liii. 3, 7.)

It was an age of persecution for the Judæans in Babylon, resembling the persecution of their ancestors in Egypt. But there was this difference: in Egypt all Israelites alike underwent slavery and enforced labour in the fields and at the builder's work, whilst in Babylon prison and death awaited only those exiles who refused to abjure their nationality and their religion. Psalm cii. was probably composed at this time, and may be considered as the poetic expression of deep grief, brightened, however, by the hope of future deliverance. The Judæans who were threatened with imprisonment or with martyrdom, followed the victories of Cyrus with great anxiety. Several prophets now appeared, who announced, to the consolation of the sufferers, the downfall of Babylon and the speedy deliverance of the exiles. Two of them have left us prophecies that are unsurpassed; indeed, one of those writers developed such a wealth of eloquence and poetry, that his works rank among the most beautiful in all literature. For when Cyrus at length commenced the long-planned siege of Babylon, and when the anxious expectation of the exiles grew beyond control, a prophet arose whose genius found scope in the subject that inspired him.

If the perfection of a work of art consists in the

fact that the thoughts and the language are in true harmony with one another, and that the thought itself is well and clearly expressed, then the lengthy utterances of that prophet, whom, in ignorance of his real name (in fact, as a makeshift), we call the second, or the Babylonian Isaiah, form an oratorical work of art without parallel. Here we find richness of thought, beauty of form, great power and touching softness, poetic fervour, and true simplicity. Although this prophecy was only intended for the time in which it was composed, the sympathetic character of the language will ensure its appreciation in every age.

The Babylonian Isaiah not only comforted and raised his suffering Judæan brethren, but he endeavoured to give them a high aim. At the same time, in the presence of all those who had minds to comprehend and hearts to feel, whatever their race and language might be, he unfolded to the Judæans the solution of an enigma, the correctness of which has been recognised by succeeding centuries. He showed how a nation could be great but yet small, immortal, and yet miserable; a sublime example, and at the same time enslaved. Who was this prophet, who was both a great thinker and a great poet? He allowed nothing to be known about himself, and there are no records of his life. The collectors of the prophetical writings, finding that in eloquence and sublimity his words resembled those of the older Isaiah, added them to the prophecies of the older seer, and included them in the same scroll.

For no one could console the sorrowing Judæan community with such sympathy, or encourage them with such ardour as the Prophet of the Captivity. His words are like balm upon a wound, or like a soft breath of air upon a fevered brow.

"Comfort, comfort ye, my people," he began, "comfort ye, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her,

that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." (Isaiah xl.)

The exhausted and despairing community was described by this prophet as a mother who had been robbed of her children on account of her sins, but who was still dear to her husband as the beloved of his youth. This deserted one he calls "Jerusalem," the emblem of all that was tender to his soul. He exclaims to the forlorn mother:

"Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury. Thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling and wrung them out.

"There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she hath brought forth, neither is there any that taketh her by the hand, of all the sons that she has brought up. . . . . O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires, and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of precious stones, and all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. . . . .

"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

But where is this consolation to be found? Not in the hope of idle, worldly glory, not in might of power, but in an all-embracing salvation. This prophet of the Captivity was the first who clearly grasped and demonstrated that a creed of general salvation was promised through Abraham to future generations. The past was to be forgotten and forgiven; a new social order was to spring up. It would seem as if Heaven and Earth were to be re-created. All people from all the ends of the earth would be included in this universal salvation, and every knee would bend and every tongue would confess to the God adored by Israel. It was for this purpose that Abraham had been called from a distant land, and that his descendants had been destined before their birth. God had created the people of Israel to be His servant among nations, His messenger to all people, His apostle to the rest of the world; and

the prophet, in recognising this fact, describes Israel as "the ideal nation."

And is there any mission sublimer than that of being the vanguard of the world in the way of righteousness and salvation? Should Israel not be proud and elated at being chosen for such a duty? The prophet goes on to say how this ideal nation should realise its apostolic mission:

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment into truth." (Isaiah xlii.)

The Law of God was thus to be universally acknowledged, and the messenger of God was to enforce this acknowledgment by his own example in the midst of scorn, contempt, and persecution. Israel receives her instructions from the prophet of the Captivity, who places his words, as it were, in the mouth of the nation (Isaiah xlix.). He taught that martyrdom, bravely encountered and borne with gentle resignation, would ensure the victory of the law of righteousness, which was also the law of idealised Israel. The leading conception that runs through Isaiah's poetical monologue, spoken as it were by Israel, is expressed by the prophet in a short, but effective verse:—

"For mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all peoples." (Isaiah lvi. 7.)

The fall of the Babylonian empire, with its absurd and immoral idolatry, and the deliverance of the Judæan community, were the first steps in this great work of universal salvation. The fall of Babylon seemed indeed so inevitable to the prophet that he mentioned it as a certain fact, and not in prophetic language.

He apostrophized Babylon with a song of contempt; he derided the astrological science by

which the Babylonian sages boasted that they could raise the veil from the future; he treated the coarse idolatry of the Chaldæans with more bitter irony than any of his predecessors had done. He foretold the siege of the city by Cyrus, and declared that the Persian conqueror would give freedom to the Judæan and Israelite exiles; that they would return to their country and rebuild Jerusalem and the Temple. The prophet laid great stress upon these predictions, declaring that in their realisation the Divine Providence would be manifest. Cyrus was but an instrument of God for furthering the deliverance of Judah and the salvation of the world.

In honour of the return of the exiles, all the wonders of the flight out of Egypt would be renewed, every mountain and hill would be made low, springs would be found in the wilderness, and the desert would blossom like a rose. The exiles would raise Jerusalem from its ruins, and in their beloved city would accomplish the aim of their existence. But in spite of his reverence for Jerusalem, the prophet declared that the Divine Being was too great to be pictured as dwelling within a temple, however spacious it might be, but that each human heart should be as a temple dedicated to God.

"Thus says the Lord: The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me; and where is the place of my rest. For all these things hath mine hand made, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at my word." (Isaiah lxvi. 1.)

It is to the exquisite piety of some of the Judæans in exile that we attribute the following thought:

"Behold, the heaven of heavens contain Thee not; how much less a temple." (I. Kings viii. 27.)

Unfortunately, in spite of the beautiful words of the prophet of the Captivity, the greater part of the nation declined to accept this apostolic work, and remained blind and deaf. Instead of making

the Law of God beloved, they made it contemptible, and became contemptible themselves.

Thus the ideal and the real were at variance with one another, and the prophet felt that his mission was to preach, to exhort, and to denounce. The Judæan community in the Captivity consisted of two inimical classes or parties; on the one side, were the more pious and patriotic; on the other, the worldly and the callous. The former, who had become weak and despondent from continued persecution and suffering, dared not come forward at this anxious time to oppose their persecutors; they were oppressed by the sorrowful thought that God had forsaken His people and had forgotten them, whilst their enemies called out mockingly, "Let the Lord be glorified and we will see your joy." (Isaiah lxvi. 5.) Now the aim of the great unknown prophet was to encourage the one class to action, and to move the other to penitence and improvement. He announced that God's salvation was at hand, and that if those who were worldly and egotistical persisted in evil, they would reap the punishment of their sins, whilst the pious would be rewarded with undimmed happiness. He finally described the salvation of the world, and the return of all the children of Israel to Judah.

The king Nabonad and the Babylonian people probably felt less anxiety about the result of the war between Persia and Babylon than did the Judæan exiles. For the Judæans were alternating between the highest hopes and the most despondent fears; the continued existence or downfall of the Judæan race hung upon the issue of this war. The Babylonians on the contrary looked with a certain indifference upon all Cyrus's preparations. But one night, when they were dancing and carousing at one of their orgies, a large and powerful army appeared before the bastions of the city. The Babylonians were utterly unprepared

for resistance, and when day broke, Babylon was filled with the enemy. Thus, as the prophet had foretold, the city of Babylon fell (539), but the king and the people escaped their predicted doom.

Cyrus was a humane conqueror, yet in one day the disgusting idolatry of Babylon was abolished. The worship of the victorious Persians and Medes was pure in comparison with that of the Babylonians, and as the former worshipped only two or three gods, they professed a horror at the image-worship of the Babylonians, and probably destroyed their idols.

The fall of Babylon cured the Judæan community radically and for all time of idolatry. For the exiles saw that those highly honoured images were now lying in the dust, that Bel was on his knees, that Nebo was humbled, and that Merodach had fallen. The destruction of Babylon completed the change in the Judæan people, and their hard hearts became softened. From that time all clung to their God, even the worldly-minded and the sinners. For had they not learned how His word, spoken by the mouth of His prophets, had been fulfilled? The sufferers and the mourners of Zion were no longer objects of hatred and contempt, but were on the contrary treated with veneration, and placed at the head of the community.

The most pious and patriotic amongst their number were busily engaged, after the conquest of Babylon, in hastening the deliverance and return of the exiles. Cyrus had taken possession of the throne and of the palace, and his subjects swore allegiance to him as king of Babylon and successor of the previous monarch. The first year of his reign was B.C. 538. Servants of the palace, who had crouched and trembled before Nabonad, now became servants of Cyrus. Amongst them were also eunuchs of the royal family of

Judæa, who had remained true to their faith. They, as well as some converted heathens, who had devoted themselves to the Judæan community, tried to obtain from Cyrus the freedom of their companions. In this they were probably aided by Zerubbabel, the grandson of King Jehoiachin. Those Judæans who had been imprisoned on account of the devotion with which they clung to their faith, were set free at once. But Cyrus went still further, for he permitted the Judæans to return to their own country, rebuild Jerusalem, and restore the Temple. When Cyrus occupied Babylon, all the provinces conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, from the Mediterranean to the confines of Egypt, fell beneath his sway. Judæa, therefore, belonged without further resistance to the Persian kingdom. But what reasons could have been given to the mighty conqueror for the bold request that he should allow the Judæans to have an independent government? And what could have induced Cyrus to grant this request so generously? Was it the gratification of a momentary caprice, or indifference to a strip of land, of which probably he did not even know the name, and of whose historical importance he was certainly ignorant? Or had one of the Judæan eunuchs, as is mentioned later, described to the Persian conqueror how a Judæan prophet had foretold his victories, and had prophesied that he would let a banished people return to their home? Or was he so much impressed by the faith of the Judæans (which resembled his own), that he was induced to favour the believers in that faith? The ultimate reason for his decision is unknown, but Cyrus not only granted permission to the Judæans to return to their country, but he restored to the exiles the sacred vessels belonging to the Temple, the vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had seized and placed as trophies of victory in the temple of Bel.

As soon as the permission for the return had

been granted, a group of men appeared to organise the band of exiles. The leadership was entrusted to two men of about the same age, and of distinguished lineage, Zerubbabel, called in Babylon Sheshbazzar, the son of Shealtiel, and grandson of king Jehoiachin, therefore a scion of David's house, and Joshua, the son of Jehozedek, and grandson of the last high priest Seraiah. They were joined by ten men, so that they formed a company of twelve, in order to represent in some way the twelve tribes. Cyrus dignified Zerubbabel by making him governor or regent (Pechah) of the province which the exiles were to re-occupy, the appointment being in reality a stepping-stone to royal honours. All the Judæans who were to return to their own country presented themselves before those leaders.

Compared with those who had once gone out of Egypt, the number of those who now returned was very small, but still there were more than could have been expected, 42,360 men, women and children, counting from the age of twelve. The greater number belonged to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; there were a few Aaronites and Levites. Besides these there were some, though not many, from the other tribes and from other nations, who acknowledged the God of Israel (Gerim, Proselytes), who joined the march.

The happiness of those who were preparing for the exodus from Babylon and the return to the Holy Land was overpowering. It was like a sweet dream to be permitted to tread the soil of their own country, and to rebuild and restore the sanctuary. The event caused a great sensation amongst other nations; it was discussed, and considered as a miracle that the God of Israel had wrought on behalf of His people. A poem faithfully reproduces the mood that inspired the exiles:

"When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream,

"Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the nations, The Lord hath done great things for them.

"The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." (Ps. cxxvi.)

As the patriots were preparing to make use of their freedom to return to Jerusalem, one of their poets, in Psalm xxiv., bade them reflect whether they were worthy of this boon. For only the righteous and those who feared the Lord were to assemble upon God's ground. But who would dare to take on himself the right to pronounce judgment?

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE RETURN FROM BABYLON, THE NEW COMMUNITY IN JUDÆA, EZRA AND NEHEMIAH.

The Journey to Jerusalem—The Samaritans—Commencement of the Rebuilding of the Temple—Interruption of the Work—Darius—Haggai and Zechariah—Completion of the Temple—Contest between Zerubbabel and Joshua—Intermarriage with Heathens—The Judæans in Babylon—Ezra visits Jerusalem—Dissolution of the Heathen Marriages—The Book of Ruth—Attacks by Sanballat—Nehemiah—His arrival in Jerusalem—Fortification of the Capital—Sanballat's Intrigues against Nehemiah—Enslavement of the Poor—Nehemiah's Protest—Repopulation of the Capital—The Genealogies—The Reading of the Law—The Feast of Tabernacles—The Great Assembly—The Consecration—Departure of Nehemiah—Action of Eliashib—Withholding the Tithes—Malachi, the Last of the Prophets—Nehemiah's Second Visit to Jerusalem—His measures.

537—420 B.C.

AFTER forty-nine years of exile, in the very self-same month (Nisan) in which their ancestors had departed from Egypt some eight or nine centuries before, the Judæans now left the land of Babylon. It was the spring of the year (537) when they marched forth to take possession of their dearly-beloved home, of the much longed-for Jerusalem. It was a significant moment, carrying centuries within it. Not like trembling slaves, just freed from their chains, did they go forth, but full of gladness, their hearts beating high with lofty hopes and swelling with enthusiasm. Singers, with stringed instruments and cymbals, accompanied them on their way, and they uttered new songs of praise, beginning and ending with these words:—

"Give thanks unto the Lord for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever."

Those Judæans who remained behind in Babylon

(of whom there were many), the rich merchants, and landed proprietors, evinced their sympathy for their brethren, by giving them an escort on their march, and by presenting them with magnificent gifts to spend upon the new buildings in their own country. Cyrus sent an escort of a thousand mounted soldiers to defend the Judæans from the attacks of warlike tribes upon the way, and also to ensure their being able to take possession of Judæa. The prophecy but lately spoken was now to be realised:—

"In joy shall ye depart, and in peace shall ye be taken home." (Isaiah lv. 12.)

In peace and in safety the travellers completed the six hundred miles from Babylon to Judæa, protected by the accompanying Persian troop. The exodus from Babylon, unlike the one from Egypt, has left no reminiscences, and it seems impossible even to ascertain the names of the various halting-places.

"God led them along a straight, unexpected path, and brought them to the place of their longing." (Psalm cvii. 7.)

As the travellers approached the land of their passionate desire, after a march of four or five months, their joy became overpowering. The prophecies that had been uttered, the hopes they had cherished, the enthusiasm they had indulged in, were realized. Meanwhile their happiness was not undimmed. The Holy City, the chief object of their longing, was desolate. A great part of the country was inhabited by strangers; in the north were the Samaritans, or Cuthæans, in the south the Idumæans. But these races were soon obliged to give place to the descendants of Judah, who, with the tribe of Benjamin, returned to their ancient dwelling-places. The beginning of the new Judæan Commonwealth was indeed humble and small. The people could not occupy the whole land that be-

longed to them in former days. A population of 40,000 was not numerous enough to cultivate a large territory or to rebuild the towns. The colony was thus compelled to group itself round the capital at Jerusalem. This concentration of forces had its advantages, for the whole population being thus brought near to the capital, could take part in all its affairs. But, though the extremely confined territory of the new colony, and the small numbers of the community were calculated to depress the lofty hopes that their prophets in Babylon had awakened in the hearts of the returned exiles, and fill them with gloom, unexpected circumstances arose to renew their energies for the remodelling of the Commonwealth. From many countries, from east, west, south, and north, from Egypt, Phœnicia, and even from the Greek coast and islands, whither they had gone of their own free will or had been sold as slaves, Judæan exiles streamed back to crowd like children around their resuscitated mother, Jerusalem. Not only were they joined by many of their own race, but also by large numbers of strangers, the great and small, illustrious and obscure, who collected round them. They were received with rejoicing, for they all acknowledged the God of Israel, and were ready to follow His laws, and the new proselytes gave a certain strength or feeling of self-confidence to the young community.

At the approach of the seventh month, in which, according to law and custom, various festivals occur, the elders of the families among all classes in Jerusalem assembled, and marching under the command of their two leaders, the governor Zerubbabel and the high priest Joshua, proceeded to perform the first act under the new conditions—they erected an altar of stone. This altar was to be the commencement of the Temple.

Meanwhile, the leaders commenced preparations

for the erection of this great and important edifice, the building of which should be a centre of attraction to the whole community. The rich gifts which they had brought with them enabled them to hire labourers and also artisans from Babylon, and, as in the days of King Solomon, cedar trees were procured from Lebanon. Stone was brought from the mountains for the foundation of the Sanctuary. Not only Zerubbabel and Joshua but also the heads of families, and a large number of the people were to be present at the commencement of the building, when a solemn ceremony was performed. Once more the Aaronites appeared in their priestly garments, sounding their trumpets; the Levites of the house of Asaph chanted songs of praise, declaring God's mercy to be everlasting; and the people burst forth into a loud transport of joy. But this day of gladness was somewhat marred by those who regretted that the new Temple was smaller and less magnificent than the old one.

Jerusalem, so long mourned and wept over, began to rise from her ruins. The joyful enthusiasm occasioned by the re-building of the city was, however, soon to be disturbed; the honeymoon of the young Commonwealth waned rapidly, and sorrow suddenly appeared in her midst. Close to the boundaries of Judæa lived the mixed tribes of Samaritans or Cuthæans. These people had partly accepted the doctrines taught them by an Israelite priest at Bethel, but they had still retained many of their own idolatrous practices. Quite unexpectedly, some of the Samaritan chiefs came to Jerusalem, with the request that they might be allowed to help in rebuilding the Temple, and also be received into the Judæan community. This seemed so important a point to the Judæans, that they called a council to discuss the subject. The decision was against the Samaritans. Zerubbabel informed the Samaritan chiefs that their people would not, could

not be permitted to join in the re-building of the Temple. But this decision produced disturbing consequences. From that day the Samaritans began to persecute the Judæan community with revengeful hatred. They developed a spirit of enmity which seemed to show that they were more anxious to do harm to the Judæans and to hinder the rebuilding of the Temple than to take part in the divine service in Jerusalem. At one time they tried to make the Judæans callous as to the building of the Temple, and at another time they bribed Persian officials to disturb the workmen; so that the work was interrupted for fully fifteen years. In fact, the unfortunate position of the Jews much resembled that of the Israelites after their first invasion of Canaan. The neighbouring tribes envied them their strip of land, and harassed them with hostilities. They were powerless to defend themselves, for they lacked the means for carrying on war.

Under these circumstances the members of the community gave the first thought to themselves, and not to the general welfare. The richest and most distinguished persons built large and splendid houses out of the building materials designed for the Temple. Bad harvests, drought, and hail disappointed the hopes of the agriculturists. Much was sown, and little reaped; there was hardly sufficient to feed the people, and not enough to clothe them, and whoever earned money placed it in a purse full of holes. Still worse was the moral deterioration caused by this physical distress. The people did not actually relapse into idolatry, they were radically cured of that evil; but selfishness took the upper hand, and the members of the community often treated one another most harshly. This state of things contrasted sadly with the new-born hopes of the people, and damped the courage of some of the nobler spirits.

The death of Cambyses (521) and the succession of Darius, the third Persian king (521–485), led, meanwhile, to a favourable change for Judæa. Darius, differing from his predecessor, was, like Cyrus, a mild and generous ruler. A strange tradition tells us that Zerubbabel went to Persia and there found favour in the eyes of Darius on account of his wisdom. As a proof of his favour, Darius sent Zerubbabel back to Jerusalem with permission to re-build the temple at the king's expense. This was not so easy to accomplish. Zerubbabel and Joshua had probably agreed to proceed with the building after all disturbances had ended. But the people, at least the heads of families exclaimed: "The time has not yet come to rebuild the Temple." It required the enthusiasm of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to set the work in motion. These prophets harangued the people frequently during several successive months (from Elul to Kislev 520), at the same time prophesying future events. At last they roused the people to recommence their work. In four years (519–516) the building was finished and the Sanctuary was consecrated, with immense joy and satisfaction, just before the Feast of Passover.

Seventy years had passed since the destruction of the Temple of Solomon by Nebuchadnezzar, when the entire nation assembled at Jerusalem for the consecration of the second Temple, henceforth to be the very centre of the community. Three weeks later the Feast of Passover was celebrated by the Israelites themselves, as well as by those who had conscientiously joined the faith. Meanwhile, although this young community was imbued with the spirit of the Law and of the prophets, and, although the people anxiously strove for unity, there lurked amongst them a discordant element, difficult to suppress and liable to kindle hostilities. The people had two leaders: Zerubbabel, of the

royal house of David, and Joshua, the high priest, of Aaronite descent. One was at the head of the secular, the other of the spiritual power. It was impossible to prevent the jurisdiction of the one power from occasionally overlapping that of the other. Zerubbabel could certainly boast of the people's allegiance to the royal house of David, and he seemed to represent its former glories. The prophet Haggai had called him the chosen favourite of God, His precious Signet-ring; but this in itself was a cause of suspicion. The enemies of the Judæans had some reason in their complaints against the community, in so far that they had nourished thoughts of electing as king this descendant of David. On the other hand, the prophet Zechariah had maintained that the high priest Joshua should wear the crown, ascend the throne, and effect the realisation of the Messianic hopes. In this way he had given the preference to the descendants of the priesthood. Peace could only be restored by the withdrawal of one of the two leaders: their joint rule could not fail to be the occasion of excitement and irritation. A choice had to be made between the two, and Zerubbabel was obliged to give way, the high priest being more necessary than the king's son. It is probable that Zerubbabel left Jerusalem and returned to Babylon, and thus the house of David retreated into the background.

After Zerubbabel's withdrawal, the leadership of the community was given into the hands of the high priest Joshua, and after his death into those of his son Jehoiakim. Was this change satisfactory? No evil is reported of the first two high priests, but also nothing particularly favourable which could warrant their position as the strength and head of the community. The supreme command over the people, does not seem to have been given to the high priest, but to have been vested in a governor

or administrator (Pechah) appointed in Judæa, either by the Persian Kings or by the satraps of Syria and Phœnicia. These officials do not appear to have lived in Jerusalem, but to have visited the city from time to time. On public occasions the governor, seated on a throne, heard and decided disputes, and restored peace. Occasionally however, he caused dissensions and aggravated bad feelings, in order to raise complaints against the Judæans. For as some Judæans nourished the hope, held out by the prophets, that Judah might yet become a mighty power, to whom kings and nations would be subordinate, so occasionally these judges were able to raise a suspicion that the people were plotting a defection from Persia. Such accusations commenced directly after the death of Darius, in the reign of his successor, Xerxes (Ahasuerus, 485-464). The enemies of the Judæans, particularly the Samaritans, did not fail to draw the governor's attention to those pernicious designs, and thus caused unfavourable decrees to be issued against them at Court. Added to this, the governors tried to oppress the landowners by excessive demands. The position of the Judæans in their own country, to which they had looked forward with such buoyant hope, grew worse and worse in the second and third generations.

In order to free themselves, on the one side at least, from these constant troubles, the most distinguished Judæan families took a step that led in the end to unfortunate complications. They approached the neighbouring peoples, or received the advances of the latter in too friendly a spirit, and as a proof of the sincerity of their feelings, they began to form connections by marriage. As in the days when the Israelites first occupied the land of Canaan (in the time of the Judges), the necessity for friendly intercourse with neighbouring tribes led to mixed marriages; so during the second

occupation of Palestine by the Israelites, a similar necessity led to similar results. But the circumstances differed in so far that, whereas the Canaanites, Hittites, and other original owners of the soil, practised abominable idolatry and infected the Israelites with their criminal customs, the neighbouring tribes of the Judæan commonwealth, particularly the Samaritans, had given up idolatry, and were longing earnestly and truly to take part in the divine service at Jerusalem. They were, in fact, proselytes to the religion of Judæa; and were they always to be sternly repulsed? The principal Judæan families determined to admit the foreigners into the community, and the high priest, of that time, either Jehoiakim or his son Eliashib was ready to carry these wishes into effect. Marriages were therefore contracted with the Samaritans and other neighbouring people, and even some members of the family of the high priests formed such connections.

The leader of the Samaritans at that time was Sanballat, a man of undaunted strength of will and action, clever, cunning, audacious and persevering. He was an honest proselyte, who believed in the God of Israel, and desired to worship in His Temple; but he determined as it were, to storm the kingdom of Heaven. If he were not allowed a part in it voluntarily, he would seize it by force or by cunning. Not only the Samaritans, but also the Moabites and the Ammonites, were among the people now allied to the Judæans by marriage.

Tobiah, the leader of the Ammonites was doubly related to Judæan families. He had married a daughter of the noble family of Arach, and a distinguished man, Meshullam, the son of Berechiah, had made the daughter of Tobiah his wife. Mixed marriages with Ammonites and Moabites were stringently prohibited by the Law, until

the tenth generation had elapsed after these conversions.

The leaders of the Judæan community, the high priest and others, who surely would have dreaded openly violating the law, doubtless eased their consciences by some mild interpretation of its tenets. But not all were so pliable. A small number of some of the noblest families had kept themselves pure from mixed marriages, which they deplored as an infraction of the Law and as a cause of deterioration to the Judæan race. The singers and scribes, and the custodians of the old and highly honoured manuscripts, were most opposed to mixed marriages. They may have raised their voices against the weakness of their co-religionists, against this mingling with the stranger, but as they were in the minority their voices would not be heeded. But when a leading authority appeared in Jerusalem from the land of exile, then the minority cried out loudly against what had taken place, and a complete reaction followed, from which disagreeable complications necessarily ensued.

It is but rarely the case that new historical formations are made with such suddenness that the contemporary witnesses of the change are themselves struck by it, and are reminded at every turn that old things have passed away, and that a new order has arisen. In general the people who live during an important crisis of history are unaware of the changes occurring in their opinions, in their customs, and even in their language. Such a change, imperceptible at first, but complete and remarkable in its results, had come over the Judæans during the first half of the fifth century. This change did not proceed from the community of Judæa, but from those who remained in the land of exile; it soon, however, penetrated to the mother-country, where it had important and lasting results.

In Babylon, the land of the captivity, a con-

siderable number of the descendants of the exiles had remained behind, either from attachment to their property, or from various other reasons. But they had been touched by the unbounded enthusiasm of their co-religionists, and they had shown their sympathy by rich gifts and fervent wishes. The Babylonian Judæans laid great importance upon maintaining their own characteristics, as well as their own nationality. They kept themselves apart from all their neighbours, intermarried with one another, and held the traditional Law to be the rule of life. They followed the behests of the Law strictly, in order to have some firm tie to lay hold on, a bond that would of itself unite them to all the members of their community. They could not offer sacrifices, or even keep the observances connected with the precincts of the Temple. But all the more scrupulously did they abide by those customs that were independent of the sanctuary, such as the sabbath, circumcision, and the dietary laws. Without doubt they had houses of prayer, where they assembled at stated times. Here they made use of the Hebrew tongue to such an extent that it could not become a strange language to them, but was used in their common speech. They obtained a correct knowledge of the language from the manuscripts which they had brought with them, and which they made the object of careful study. They gave particular heed to a portion of these manuscripts which had been somewhat neglected, or had only been read at stated times, namely the Pentateuch, with its code of laws and observances. During the time of the captivity, the writings of the prophets had been chiefly read, because they possessed the greater power of consolation. But as soon as it was necessary to rouse the feelings and to strengthen the opinions of the people, and to give a peculiar character to their way of living, then the

Book of the Law was sought out and consulted. The Thorah, or Law, so long neglected in its own country, received due honour and attention on a foreign soil. For instance, the sabbath had been kept far less strictly in Jerusalem than in the Babylonian-Persian community. This ardour for the exact carrying out of the Law and its observances found an embodiment in Ezra, who was the cause of a momentous change in the history of the nation, and who endowed it with a new character. He did not stand alone, but found others who thought as he did.

This man, who was the creator of a new religious and social order of things, seemed specially entitled to kindle an unwonted enthusiasm for the Thorah, for he was a descendant of high priests. It was his ancestor Hilkiah who found the book of Deuteronomy in the Temple, and who, by giving it himself to King Josiah, brought about great changes. He was also the great-grandson of that high priest, Seraiah, who was slain by the command of Nebuchadnezzar, and whose sons carried the Book of the Law to Babylon. Ezra had, therefore, the right, as well as the opportunity, of occupying himself with the study of this book. But he gave it more attention than either his ancestors or his relatives had done. After he had read and studied it with care, he determined that it should not remain a mere dead letter, but that it should be revived in the daily life of the people. He began by applying it to himself, carefully obeying the laws regarding dress, diet, and particularly those bearing upon the festivals. Then he assumed the post of teacher to his brethren; he laid the Law so clearly before them that they were bound to understand it, and he urged them to follow it in every detail. The Law was to him an emanation of the Deity, manifested to Israel by Moses; therefore he placed it higher, far higher, than the writings of the other

prophets, for the first prophet and law-giver was the greatest of all. Impressed by the Divine inspiration of the Law of Moses, and glowing with zeal to make it generally obeyed, he found no difficulty in infusing his own belief and his own zeal into the Judæans of Babylon and Persia. He soon acquired an honoured position amongst them, his word gained authority, and he was more eagerly listened to than the prophets themselves. Ezra had no doubt that the Law was but negligently followed in Judæa, and he thought that by visiting that country he might awaken his fellow-believers to the perception of its true worth. Or he may have been guided by some instinctive feeling that compelled him to go to Jerusalem, where he could fulfil all his religious duties in the Temple itself. As soon as he had determined upon the journey, he invited those members of his faith who might be willing to join him. The number that responded was a considerable one, including over 1,600 men, besides women and children, of distinguished families, who had remained in the land of captivity, and amongst them was a great-grandson of Zerubbabel, a descendant of the house of David. Those who could not take part in the exodus gave Ezra rich gifts in gold, silver, and precious vessels for the Temple. It is extraordinary that King Artaxerxes (Longimanus) should also have sent presents for the sanctuary in Jerusalem, and that many Persian nobles should have followed his example. It is a fact that at this time the God of Israel had many earnest worshippers amongst the Persians and other nations, and that from sunrise to sunset His name was glorified and reverenced among the people. Not only did Artaxerxes grant Ezra permission to journey with his brethren to Jerusalem, but he also gave him letters to the various satraps of the countries through which he passed, and to the governor of Palestine. He would also

have sent an escort to protect the travellers from hostile tribes had Ezra wished it. But the latter refused, because he and his companions were assured that the God to whom they prayed would listen to them and would protect them.

The arrival of Ezra and his large suite must have caused much surprise in Jerusalem (459-458). They came provided with letters from the king, laden with gifts, and imbued with enthusiastic feelings. Without doubt, Ezra's name as a writer and lawgiver had already penetrated as far as Judæa, and he was received with every mark of consideration. No sooner had he undertaken the office of teacher than the more serious-minded of the community brought their complaints before him, for they strongly disapproved of the marriages that their countrymen had contracted with the neighbouring tribes. Ezra was dismayed when he heard of these occurrences. Those whose duty it was to intercede for their brethren in the Temple, had connected themselves with the heathen, to the disgrace of the Law. Ezra held this to be a terrible sin. For the Judæan or Israelite race was in his eyes a holy one, and suffered desecration by mingling with foreign tribes, even though they had abjured idolatry. According to Ezra's reading of the Law, heathens who had accepted the Law might enter into the community, but were not considered as an integral part of it, being regarded as a group apart. The Gibeonites, in former days the slaves of the Temple, who had accepted the Israelite doctrines for more than a thousand years, were still kept distinct, and were not permitted to intermarry with the Israelites; and in Ezra's opinion, the new proselytes from the heathen nations should be treated in a similar manner. The intercourse with them ought not to be of an intimate character, Ezra's opinion being based, not on ancestral pride, but on religious and social grounds. Some dim presenti-

ment warned him that the reception of proselytes or half-proselytes into the community—of those in fact, who had not been tried and proved in the furnace of suffering, as the seed of Abraham had been—would give undue preponderance to the foreign element, and would destroy all the moral and religious advantages which the Judæans had acquired. This fear seized upon his whole soul; he rent his clothes, tore the hair from his head and beard, and sat fasting in anguish at what he considered to be a dangerous and terrible sin. Then he entered the court of the Temple, and throwing himself upon his knees, he confessed with shame that the people had not improved by their bitter experiences, but that they had relapsed into their former evil ways. This avowal of his poignant guilt, expressed with sobs and tears, attracted all those who were standing near him—men, women and children. They burst into passionate weeping, as if their tears could obliterate the dark pages in their history. Touched by the sight of such woe, one of the community, Shecaniah, made this important suggestion: "Let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord." The proposal impressed Ezra favourably, he rose and urged the heads of the families, who were present on that occasion, to swear in the Sanctuary of their God that they would repudiate their foreign wives and their children. That moment decided the fate of the Judæan people. Ezra, and those who thought as he did, raised a wall of separation between the Judæans and the rest of the world. But this exclusiveness was not strictly in accordance with the letter of the Law, for Ezra himself, with all his knowledge, was not able to point out any passage in the Thorah, implying that mixed marriages were

forbidden when contracted with those who acknowledged the God of Israel.

Such members of the community as, in a moment of enthusiasm, had taken this vow, were now obliged to keep it. With bleeding hearts they separated themselves from their wives (the daughters of neighbouring tribes) and repudiated their own children. The sons and relations of the high priest were forced to set an example to the rest. The elders of the people, who were the most ardent disciples of the Law, formed a kind of senate. They issued a proclamation throughout Judah, commanding all who had been guilty of contracting mixed marriages, to appear within three days in Jerusalem, on pain of excommunication. A special court of enquiry was instituted for this one question. Ezra himself selected the members who were to make the needful researches to discover whether the Judæans had really repudiated their wives. So thoroughly was the work of this court of enquiry carried out, that all those who were living in the towns of Judæa separated themselves from their wives and children, as the inhabitants of Jerusalem had done. Still there were some who, influenced by family feelings, made some show of resistance.

The severity with which this separation from all neighbouring tribes, Samaritans and others, had been effected, led naturally to grave results. The wall of separation that Ezra and his party had raised against those who were truly anxious to belong to the community, hurt them deeply. They were to be separated for ever from the Deity they had chosen, and excluded from the Sanctuary in Jerusalem to which they had belonged. A letter of separation sent to each one of them changed their friendly relations towards the Judæans to one of enmity. Hatred which arises from despised affection is always the bitterest. The

grief of the wives deserted by their husbands, and the sight of children disowned by their fathers, could not fail to awaken and to increase the feelings of anger in those who were closely related to them. Sanballat and Tobiah, men of original and energetic minds, were at the head of the party excluded from the community. Tobiah, the Ammonite, was related to several Judæan families. They had both accepted the Judæan teaching, and now they were both to be repulsed. Henceforth they assumed a hostile position towards Judæa, but insisted upon retaining their rights; that is to say, the privilege of worshipping in the Temple. At first they probably took steps to maintain their peaceful intercourse with the Judæans, and urged them to revoke their cruel decision. In Jerusalem, as well as in the provinces, there was a party which, no doubt, strongly disapproved of Ezra's severe verdict. Even his adherents may have hesitated about the propriety of dissolving marriage with women who had, at all events outwardly, accepted the Law. Was Ezra's severity justifiable? Did not the historical records contain many instances of Israelites having married foreign wives? Such questions must have been constantly put at that time.

A charming literary production, written probably at that date, reproduces the opinions of the gentler members of the community. The poetical author of the Book of Ruth apparently relates a simple idyllic story of a distinguished family of Bethlehem migrating to Moab, where the two sons married Moabite wives; but he touches at the same time upon one of the burning questions of the day. Ruth, the Moabitess, is described as saying to her mother-in-law, "Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest will I die, and

there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." And the Moabitess kept her word faithfully. Upon her marriage with Boaz, her Judæan husband, the people exclaim: "The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel." The son born to Ruth was the ancestor of David, the great king of Israel. The several incidents of this exquisite story are most delicately and artistically developed. But the author had two facts to place before his readers, namely—that the royal house of Israel sprang from a Moabitess, and that the Moabitess, having connected herself closely with the people of Israel, and acknowledged their God, gave proof of such virtues as could only grace a daughter of Israel: chastity, refinement of feeling, and power of self-sacrifice. The application of this literary production to the all-absorbing question of the day was self-evident. Amongst those unfortunate wives who had been, or who were to be repudiated by their husbands, might there not be some who resembled Ruth? And the children born of foreign women, but having Judæan fathers, were they to be looked down upon as heathens? Surely, the house of David, the royal family, whose ancestor had married a Moabitess, belonged to the Judæan nation.

But all these representations were of no avail. Ezra and the reigning senate in Jerusalem insisted most severely upon the exclusion from the community of all people who could not claim Israelite origin, and who were, therefore, not of "the holy seed." The failure of all conciliatory measures resulted in hostilities, which lasted for several years (457–444). Ezra was, unfortunately, not a man of action; he could only pray and arouse the feelings of others, but he could not prevent many Judæan families from secretly going over to his opponents.

On the other hand, Sanballat and his followers were men of decided character and of virulent hatred towards their adversaries, and they took every opportunity of harassing their enemies. At last they even attacked Jerusalem.

What could have inspired them with such boldness, for they knew that Ezra was favoured by the Persian court, and that Judæan favourites had the ear of Artaxerxes? Did they, perhaps, count upon the weakness or possibility of change in the Persian king's mood? Or had they been emboldened by the revolt of Megabyzus, satrap of Syria, to whom both Judæa and Samaria were subordinate? And while the Syrians vanquished one Persian army after another, were they encouraged to commence hostilities on their own account, and to deal a blow at the heart of the enemy? Whatever might have induced Sanballat and his followers to take warlike steps against Jerusalem, they were entirely successful. They were able to lead a troop of soldiery, whilst their opponents in Jerusalem were mostly ignorant of the use of arms. The result was that Sanballat and his followers made breaches in the walls of the city, that they burned the wooden gates, and destroyed many of the buildings, so that Jerusalem was soon reduced to a heap of ruins. They, however, spared the Temple, for it was sacred in their eyes; but it was nevertheless abandoned, and most of the inhabitants, having lost the protection of the city walls, left Jerusalem, and established themselves in other places wherever they could obtain a living.

The Aaronites and Levites, who were no longer in receipt of the tithes of the harvest, were obliged to seek new means of subsistence, and to leave the Temple. The commonwealth of Judæa was going through a sad phase after its recent reconstitution of barely a century's duration. Many noble families made peace with their neighbours, took

back their repudiated wives, and contracted new connections with the stranger. And they pledged themselves by a reciprocal vow of constancy to respect these new ties. For a short time it seemed as if Ezra's great work were frustrated, and as if the life of the commonwealth were endangered. How much was still required to effect a complete dissolution?

The religious ardour kindled by Ezra had spread, however, too widely to be rapidly extinguished. Some of the Judæans, maddened by grief at the destruction and desolation of Jerusalem, carried their lamentations to the Persian empire. There they counted upon the aid of Nehemiah, the Judæan cupbearer of Artaxerxes, whose relative Hananiah had actually witnessed the destruction of their city. They gave him a harrowing description of the sad state of the Judæans and of the fall of the Holy City. Nehemiah was struck with dismay at these tidings. He belonged to the zealous party in Persia, and was, if possible, stricter than Ezra. Jerusalem, the Holy City, had always presented itself to his imagination as especially protected by God and surrounded by a fiery wall, that would permit no enemy to approach with impunity, and now it had been humbled and put to shame, like any earthly city. But he did not allow his grief to master him; he was a man of vigorous action and great executive power. At court he had learned the art of governing, and knew that a firm will could control both men and circumstances. He instantly determined upon going to Jerusalem, where he would put an end to this miserable state of things. But how could he leave Persia, seeing that he was bound to the court by his office? The great favour that Artaxerxes always showed him chained him to the place, and removed all prospects of a journey to Jerusalem.

Full of tact, Nehemiah refrained from entreating

Artaxerxes to give him leave to start upon his journey until a favourable opportunity should occur. But the grief that was gnawing at his heart soon showed itself in his face and clouded his usually cheerful countenance. One day, when he was pouring out wine for the king and queen his expression of grief attracted their attention, and Artaxerxes questioned him as to its cause. He instantly made use of the opportunity, and answered, "Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my father's sepulchre, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" He then expressed his earnest wish to the king. Artaxerxes at once granted it, and not only encouraged Nehemiah to undertake the journey, but advised him to rebuild the city walls, and to restore peace in the unsettled State. The king gave him letters to the various governors of the countries through which he would pass, and a grant of timber for building purposes. He even appointed an escort of soldiers to accompany him, and named him governor of Judæa. The king made but one condition, namely, that his stay in Jerusalem was not to be a lasting one, but that he must return to the Persian court at the expiration of a given time.

A new chapter in the history of the commonwealth commences with Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem, or rather that event completes the chapter begun by Ezra. Nehemiah left the city of Susa with a large retinue, and accompanied by an armed escort. As he travelled through Palestine, he presented his credentials to the various governors, and thus Sanballat and Tobiah were apprised of the object of his journey, and naturally felt that they were on the eve of a war. It was a severe disappointment to them, that a Judæan, the favourite of Artaxerxes, who would in all probability devote himself to the protection of his persecuted brethren, should have been appointed governor of the land.

When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, he abstained from appearing in public for three days. He wished to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the scene of his duties and with the people with whom he would come into contact. Meanwhile, he devoted himself to the establishment of a kind of Court, for he was exceedingly rich, and surrounded himself with royal luxury. He kept the reason of his sojourn secret, and did not even divulge it to the leaders of the community, for he did not trust them. One night he rode forth secretly to examine the circumference of the ruined walls, and to devise a plan for reconstructing them. He then summoned the leading men of the community, and announced, to their amazement, that King Artaxerxes had given him complete power, not only to rebuild the walls, but to govern the country, and that it was his intention to wipe away the disgrace and the misery that had fallen upon them. The assembled Judæans were not only ready to help him, but were prepared to aid him heart and soul. Even those who had contracted foreign marriages, and were on a friendly footing with the neighbouring tribes, evinced their approbation. But Nehemiah had imposed a heavy task upon himself. He was to reorganise a disjointed commonwealth, whose members, influenced by fear, selfishness, and a variety of motives, had not sufficient courage to face real danger. Nehemiah's first care was to fortify Jerusalem; he himself superintended the works, and made them less arduous by a careful division of labour. But the task of rebuilding was necessarily a tedious one. The repudiated proselytes, headed by Sanballat and Tobiah, whose hope of alliance with the Judæans had been decisively frustrated by Nehemiah's words:—"Ye shall have no portion, no right, no memorial in Jerusalem"—developed as much ardour in disturbing the work as the Judæans did in accom-

plishing it. They cunningly tried to make the Persians suspect Nehemiah of treason, and of having conceived the ambitious scheme of becoming king of Judæa. Then they endeavoured to discourage the workmen by deriding them, and by declaring that the walls were weak enough for a jackal to break down. When the walls rose to half their destined height, the enemy secretly determined upon an attack. Nehemiah, however, had armed some of his own people, as well as some of the leading members of the community, and placed them on guard. Each workman had a sword girt upon his side; he carried his burden in one hand and his weapon in the other. In order to hasten the completion of the walls, the work was carried on continuously from dawn to sunset. Nehemiah himself regularly inspected the works, accompanied by a trumpeter. At the first blast of his trumpet, the Judæans assembled from all points.

But instead of resuming the attack upon the walls, Sanballat busied himself with devising intrigues against Nehemiah. He gave out that as soon as Jerusalem should be fortified, Nehemiah would cause himself to be proclaimed king of the Judæans and would revolt against Persia. The more credulous began to feel alarmed and to think of withdrawing from the work, so as not to be regarded in the light of accomplices by the Persians. On the other hand, the leaders of those tribes who were related to the Judæans, sought to obtain a hearing from Nehemiah. But all these intrigues were of no avail, and he completed the work commenced with such energy as even to compel the unwilling admiration of the enemy. From that time Sanballat and his followers appear to have given up all their fruitless attempts to disturb Nehemiah, or to hinder his work.

But within the community itself, the great reformer had to fight no less severe a battle. Many

of the most distinguished families were not only playing a double game of secretly befriending the enemy by retailing all Nehemiah's sayings, but they were oppressing the poor in the most heartless manner. When in their days of scarcity, the poor had borrowed money from the rich in order to pay taxes to the king, or had obtained grain for their own consumption, they had given as security, their fields, their vineyards, their olive groves, their own houses, and sometimes even their very children; and if the debt were not repaid, the creditors would retain the land as their own property, and keep the children for slaves. As the complaints of those who had been thus cruelly treated rose more and more bitterly to the ears of Nehemiah, he determined to bring the hard-hearted wealthy Judæans to a knowledge of their misdeeds. He called a large assembly together, and spoke severely against this especial form of heartlessness, which was severely condemned by the Law.

"We Judæans in Persia," he exclaimed, "have according to the best of our ability redeemed our brethren the Judæans, which were sold unto all the heathens, and will ye even sell your brethren? Or shall they be sold unto us?" he added ironically. But so imposing was Nehemiah's appearance, so impressive his voice, and so eager were the great and the rich to obey the words of the Law, that they promised forthwith, not only to release the enslaved persons, but also to restore the houses, fields and gardens to their owners and to cancel their debts. Nehemiah made use of this favourable mood to insist that the rich should bind themselves by oath to carry out their promises.

This was an important victory gained by the Law, as personified by Nehemiah, over selfishness. He indeed exceeded all others in the example of self-denial which he set before them. Not only did he

refuse the tithes due to him, but he made the poor an advance in money and grain, and when the repayment was due, he would not accept it. His relatives and servants behaved in the same generous and unselfish manner.

In this way Nehemiah overcame all difficulties and brought order into the community. The people hung upon his words, and the leading men followed him willingly. But when the walls of the city were rebuilt and the gates replaced, it appeared that the Levitical gatekeepers, and in fact all classes of the Levites, were missing. They had migrated into other parts of the country upon the destruction of the city, because they were receiving no tithes. Altogether, the city was but thinly populated, and many houses were destroyed or deserted. Jerusalem had therefore to be peopled again, and the Temple furnished anew with priests.

Nehemiah caused a proclamation to be issued to all those who had deserted Jerusalem in the time of its insecurity, and to all the settlers in the land, inviting them to return and take up their abode in the capital. Many of the noble families had offered to do this unasked. But as those who had volunteered to return were too few to re-people Jerusalem, it was determined that the tenth part of the population of the whole country should be called upon to migrate to the capital, and that they should be selected by lot. Nehemiah, however, did not think every one worthy of becoming a citizen of the Holy City, least of all those born of mixed marriages. He carefully went through the register of Judæans who had returned from Babylon, examining the descent of each separate family. He was remarkably strict in these matters. Three families, consisting of six hundred and forty-two persons, who could not prove that they were descended from Israelites,

were not admitted, and three Aaronite families, who were unable to produce the register of their tribe, were deprived of the dignity of the priesthood.

As soon as Nehemiah had fortified Jerusalem, and had taken pains to provide a population for it, he had thus given the community a centre-point and had rendered the people a compact body; his next step was to breathe into this body the living soul of the Law. But for this purpose he required the aid of the scribes. Ezra, who had been thrown somewhat into the background by the great activity of Nehemiah, now reappeared upon the scene. On the festival celebrated on the first day of the seventh month, Ezra assembled all the people, even those who dwelt in the country. "They came as one man in the street that was before the Water-gate in Jerusalem." Here a high pulpit of wood was erected, upon which Ezra stood to read the Law. Everything was prepared for a remarkable and imposing solemnity. The assembly was a numerous one; it consisted not only of men, but also of women, and of children who were old enough to understand what they heard. When Ezra unrolled the Book of the Law, all the people arose, and when he blessed the Lord, the great God, they lifted up their hands, exclaiming Amen. Then Ezra began to read with an impressive voice, and all present listened intently. There were some, indeed, unable to follow the reading, but the Levites added a short and clear explanation, so that even the most ignorant could understand. As the people heard and understood, they were deeply moved, and burst into a passion of tears. Probably they heard for the first time that portion of Deuteronomy in which mention is made of the fearful punishments consequent upon disregard of the Law; and the people, becoming conscious of their sins, felt unworthy of the Divine love and

were overwhelmed with grief. Some time elapsed before Ezra and the priests could restore tranquillity to the excited multitude. But at length they were somewhat quieted, and began the celebration of their festival in a deeply religious mood. It was the first time that the people had taken the Book of the Law into their hearts, and that they had acknowledged it to be a part of themselves, and had felt that they were its guardians.

The change that began during the time of the Babylonian exile was now to be completed. What the prophets had commenced the scribes ended. It is remarkable that such an important assembly should have met, not in the Temple itself, but in its immediate vicinity, and that the high priest should have taken no part in it. The Sanctuary, with the altar and the vessels for sacrifice, were to a certain extent thrown into the background. Though a priest, Ezra unconsciously led the way to a separation between the Law and the Temple, and to the subordination of the priesthood to the Scriptures. The people became so enamoured of the Law, for which they had cared but little previously, that they were always longing to hear more of it. The heads of the community, whose ancestors had obstinately rejected the teaching of the prophets, and had seemed utterly incapable of reformation, now repaired on the second day to Ezra, and begged of him to continue his reading of the Pentateuch. Ezra thereupon read the portion concerning the festivals that were to be celebrated during the seventh month. It was in consequence of this that the leading men caused heralds to proclaim that all the people were to bring branches of olive trees, myrtles, and palms from the neighbouring mountains, in order to build huts or booths. The people executed this order with alacrity, and began the Festival of Tabernacles in a brighter mood than they had

ever done before. During the eight days that this festival lasted a portion of the Law was read daily, and from that time the reading of the Law had its appointed place in the Divine service. Ezra and Nehemiah were anxious that this religious fervour should cause those who still lived with their foreign wives to repudiate them of their own free-will. For this purpose a fast-day was appointed. All the people appeared fasting, in mourning, and with ashes upon their heads. The portion of the law forbidding intermarriage with Ammonites and Moabites was read and expounded. Then a general acknowledgment of sin, in the name of the people, was recited by the Levites. The desired effect was attained; the Israelites separated from their foreign wives, and denied all relationship with Samaritans and proselytes.

Ezra and Nehemiah now entreated of them to make a solemn covenant that they would for the future respect the teaching of the Law, and that they would not relapse into their old errors and shortcomings. From that day forward the whole community was to live according to the Law of Moses. Men, women, and children, the Temple servants, and even the proselytes, who clung faithfully to the Judæans, took the oath that was required of them. They swore not to give their daughters in marriage to foreigners, and not to marry daughters of foreign tribes. This one prohibition lay closest to the hearts of Ezra and Nehemiah, therefore they attached special importance to it. They also swore to observe the Sabbath and the holidays, to let the fields lie fallow every seventh year, and during that year to remit the payment of debts. Furthermore, every individual who had attained his majority was to pay annually the third of a shekel towards the maintenance of the Temple, to bring the first produce of the fields and the

orchards to the Sanctuary, every year to provide wood for the altar, and to secure to the priesthood the payment of their tithes.

The list of obligations binding on the people, was inscribed upon a scroll, which was read and sealed by the heads of the families. Nehemiah's name stood first upon the list, followed by about eighty-five signatures of importance (according to one account, one hundred and twenty names were subscribed). This important gathering of Judæans was called the Great Assembly (Keneseth ha-gedolah). Nehemiah had indeed accomplished much in a short time. He had gathered the scattered community together, had assured life and consistency to the commonwealth by the restoration of the capital and by affording security from foreign invasions, and he had also brought the people into harmony with the Law.

Nehemiah evidently attached great importance to popular assemblies, where he could make a deep impression upon his audience. He therefore convened the people a second time, to consecrate the walls of the city. As at the former ceremony, women and children were amongst the congregation. In order to impart a joyful character to these solemnities, he invited a number of Levites who were skilled in music and song, to come to Jerusalem. Two divisions of the people, starting from the same point in opposite directions, marched round the walls and met again in the Temple. At the head of each division, a choir of Levites sang hymns of praise, each choir being accompanied by a band of musicians. Ezra followed one choir, and Nehemiah the other, each of them heading an immense concourse of people. In this way the two processions passed slowly round the walls of the city. Far into the distance sounded the joyous notes of the cymbals, harps and trumpets, whilst the songs bursting from the lips of the Levites echoed again

and again from the mountains. After the day of mourning and atonement followed a day of universal joy and gladness. This festival of dedication lasted probably eight days, and appears to have taken place two years and four months after the commencement of Nehemiah's work (442).

In order to establish the community to whom he had given new life, Nehemiah sought able, worthy, and conscentious officers. It seems that it was he who divided the country into small provinces (Pelech), placing a governor or administrator over each division. To the north of the Temple, Nehemiah built an armoury which he fortified strongly, so that in case of necessity it might prove a defence for the Sanctuary; this fortress was called Birah. He appointed a faithful and God-fearing man, Hananiah, as commander. His colleague in the work of regeneration, the scribe Ezra, was overseer of the Temple; and here above all things he insisted upon the most perfect order being maintained, upon the uninterrupted performance of the sacrifices, and upon the maintenance of the Aaronites and Levites. The landowners had, it is true, bound themselves most solemnly to pay the imposts to the former, and the tithes to the latter, but this was not enough for Nehemiah, who required the provision of the supplies to be constantly watched. The Levites were sent into the country at harvest time, to collect their tithes, and to bring them back to Jerusalem. In order to secure the strict payment of the tenth part of the tithes for the Aaronites, Nehemiah built two large grain and fruit granaries, where the rightful distribution of property took place; special officials watched over this operation.

Not only did Nehemiah take the greatest interest in the re-population of the deserted city of Jerusalem, but he was also busily employed in providing the new inhabitants with suitable dwellings.

At his own cost he erected houses for the poorest of the nation, and tried in every way to remedy all defects by spending his own fortune upon his beloved country. In this way, he built up a new State, upon which he laid but one obligation, that it should abide strictly by the Law. For twelve years, he was governor of Judah (from 444 to 432); he was then obliged to return to the Court of Artaxerxes, being still a great favourite of the king. He departed with the hope that the work he had accomplished might be blessed with lasting security and glory.

But human creations are always liable to changes. No sooner had Nehemiah left than a counter-current set in that could be traced to the influence of the high priest Eliashib. The first retrograde step was taken when Eliashib held communication with the Samaritans and the foreign proselytes, against the wishes of the whole community. As an earnest of this friendship, a member of the priest's household, named Manasseh, married Nicaso, a daughter of Sanballat. Others, who had formerly rebelled against Nehemiah's strict line of separation, now followed the example of the priestly house. An entire change took place. Tobiah, the second great enemy of Nehemiah, was allowed to return unmolested to Jerusalem, and a large court in the outer Temple was actually assigned to him.

Great demoralisation was the consequence of this sudden change, which allowed what had recently been strictly forbdiden. The people as a body were so outraged by the actions of the high priest and his party that they openly showed their contempt for them. The landowners, moreover, left off paying tithes and imposts, and thus the innocent suffered, and the Levites lost their just share of the national property. To avoid starvation they were compelled to leave the Temple and the city. It constantly happened that the offerings for the sacrifice were not forthcoming, and to prevent

the altar from being unprovided with victims the priests in charge offered up lame, blind or unsightly animals. Many Judæans were so utterly disgusted at the behaviour of the priests and Aaronites, that they entirely separated themselves from the Sanctuary and from the community, following their own interests, to the neglect of all that was right, and of all that they had sworn to uphold. When this class grew prosperous, the truly pious people, who were struggling with poverty, became utterly confused in their ideas of right and wrong, and exclaimed: "It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept His charge." "Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them."

But worse than all else was the discord which prevailed in Jerusalem, and which threatened to undermine the Judæan community by causing disunion in many a household. What could be pronounced right and lawful? The father did not agree with the son; the one followed a severe law, the other a less stringent code, and thus disagreements arose between the members of the various families. The very strictest, who would not allow themselves to be shaken in their convictions, looked these melancholy facts firmly in the face, and discussed a plan of action. They turned with hope and longing towards Nehemiah, who was still at the court of Artaxerxes. If he would but return to Jerusalem, he could, with one blow, put an end to this miserable state of confusion, and restore peace, unity, and strength to the city. At this auspicious moment a God-fearing man suddenly appeared on the scene. He belonged to the party who were so greatly incensed at the behaviour of the high priest and his followers, and he undertook to chastise the wicked, and to arouse the fainting courage of the good. This man, full of vigour and moved by the

prophetic spirit, was Malachi, the last of the prophets. Worthily did he close the long list of godly men who had succeeded each other for four centuries. Malachi announced to his dejected and despairing brethren the speedy arrival of a man, the Messenger of the Covenant, whom many delighted in, and who would bring better days with him. The prophet counselled the people not to omit paying the tithes on account of the evil-doing of some of the priests, but to bring them all, as in former days, into the store-houses.

Malachi, like the early prophets, proclaimed that in the far distant future a great and terrible day would dawn, when the difference between the innocent and the guilty would be made clear. Before the coming of that last day God would send His prophet Elijah, and he would reconcile the father to the son. He bade them remember and take to heart the Law of Moses, with its statutes and its judgments, which had been given to them on Mount Horeb. And in these terms the voice of prophecy was heard for the last time.

The written Law, which had been made accessible to many through the zeal of Ezra, and which had found a body of exponents, rendered the continuance of prophetic utterances unnecessary. The scribe took the place of the seer, and the reading of the Law, either to large congregations or in prayer-houses, was substituted for prophetic revelation.

We may wonder whether Nehemiah at the Court of Persia had any idea of the yearning for his presence that existed at this very moment in Jerusalem. Had he any knowledge that Malachi's belief in better days rested upon the hope of his return? It is impossible to say, but at all events he suddenly reappeared in Jerusalem, having again obtained the king's permission to return to the country of his faith, between the years 430-424, and soon

after his arrival he became, in the words of the prophet, "like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' earth." He cleansed the community of its impure elements. He began by expelling the Ammonite Tobiah from the place which had been given to him by his priestly relative, Eliashib, and by dismissing the latter from his office. He then assembled the heads of the community, and complained bitterly of the desertion of the Temple, which was due to the fact that the tithes had not been paid to the Levites. An admonition from Nehemiah was enough to induce the landed proprietors to perform their neglected duties, and to cause the Levites to return to their service in the Temple. The charge of the collected tithes and their correct distribution he placed under the care of four conscientious Judæans—some of his devoted followers. He restored the divine service to its former solemnity, and dismissed the unworthy priests. A most important work for Nehemiah was the dissolution of the mixed marriages which had again been contracted. His action in the matter met with great opposition from the priestly house. Manasseh, a son or relation of the high priest Joiada, refused to separate himself from his Samaritan wife, Nicaso, Sanballat's daughter, and Nehemiah therefore determined to banish him from the country. Many other Aaronites and Judæans who would not obey Nehemiah's commands, were also sent into exile. After peace and order had been restored to the capital, Nehemiah tried to abolish the abuses which had found their way into the provinces. Wherever Judæans lived in close proximity to foreign tribes, such as the Ashdodites, Ammonites, Moabites, or Samaritans, mixed marriages had led to almost entire ignorance of the Hebrew tongue, for the children of these marriages generally spoke the language of their mothers. This aroused Nehemiah's anger, and stimulated his energy. He

harangued the Judæan fathers, he even cursed them, and caused the refractory to be punished. By such persistent activity he was able to accomplish the dissolution of mixed marriages, and the preservation of the Hebrew tongue.

Nehemiah next introduced the strict observance of the sabbath, which had been but negligently observed hitherto. The Law had certainly forbidden all labour on that day, but it had not defined what labour really was. At all events, the Judæans who lived in the provinces were ignorant on that point, for on the sabbath they pressed the wine, loaded their beasts of burden with corn, grapes, figs, and drove them to market into the city of Jerusalem. As soon as Nehemiah discovered that the sabbath was being kept like an ordinary week-day, he assembled the country people, and explained that they were sinning against God's Law, and they listened to him, and followed his injunctions. But he had a more difficult task in abolishing an old-established custom. Tyrian merchants were in the habit of appearing in Jerusalem on the sabbath-day bringing fresh fish from their voyages, and they found ready customers. But Nehemiah ordered that from henceforth all the gates should be closed on the sabbath eve, so that no merchant could enter the city. This law he carried out, and from that time the sabbath was rigorously observed.

The strict observance of the Law enjoined by Ezra, was followed out by Nehemiah; he strengthened the wall of separation between Judæans and Gentiles so securely, that it was almost impossible to break through it. The Judæans, who were discontented with this separation and the severity of the Law, were obliged to leave the Judæan community, and form a sect of their own. Nehemiah himself probably lived to see the formation of the first sect, and as he had himself virtually contributed to it, he thought it necessary to justify his

proceedings, and to set forth his own meritorious part in raising the fallen community. He composed a kind of memoir in which he related what he had achieved in his first and second visits to Jerusalem. At intervals he added to it the prayer that God would remember him for his services in the cause of holiness and of his people. It was a kind of self-justification written in his old age, and his name has remained eternally in the remembrance of a grateful people. To him and to Ezra, the joint authors of that great spiritual force which was henceforth to be irresistible among the Judæans, grateful posterity has attributed all the beneficial institutions, of whose origin it was ignorant.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE SOPHERIC AGE.

Enmity of the Samaritans against the Judæans—The Temple on Mount Gerizim—The High Priest Manasseh—The mixed language of the Samaritans—Their veneration for the Law of Moses—Judaism loses its national meaning—The Jubilee and Sabbatical Year—Almsgiving—The Council of Seventy—The Assyrian Characters—The Schools and the Sopherim—Observance of the Ceremonies—The Prayers—The Persian Angels and Demons—The Future Life—The Judæans under Artaxerxes II. and III.—Their Banishment to the Caspian Sea—Jochanan and Joshua contend for the office of High Priest—Bagoas—The Writings of the Period—The Greeks and Macedonians—Alexander the Great and the Judæans—Judæa accounted a Province of Cœlesyria—Struggles between Alexander's Successors—Capture of Jerusalem by Ptolemy—Judæa added to the Lagidean-Egyptian Kingdom—The Judæan Colonies in Egypt and Syria and the Greek Colonies in Palestine.

420—300 B.C.

HATRED which arises from rejected love is stronger and more vehement than enmity resulting from inexplicable antipathy, jealousy or intentional insult. Sanballat, as well as his Samaritan followers and companions, out of love and preference for the God of Israel, had struggled to be accepted in the Judæan community. The virulence of their enmity against Nehemiah, who had raised the Commonwealth from its declining state, was in reality an impetuous offer of love, by which they hoped to secure an intimate connection with Judæa. But when the Samaritans were repeatedly repulsed, this yearning love had changed into burning hatred. When Sanballat, who thought he had arrived at the height of his ambition through his connection with the high priest's

family, heard of the insult shown him, namely, that his son-in-law Manasseh had been sent into exile on account of the priest's marriage with his daughter, then the measure of his wrath was full. He cunningly conceived the plan of undermining the Judæan community, by the help of its own members. How would it be, were he to raise a temple to the God of Israel, in rivalry to the one which held sway in Jerusalem? Were there not amongst his followers priests of the descendants of Aaron, who would conduct the service in the new sanctuary according to prescribed order? The dignity of high priest would fitly clothe his son-in-law Manasseh, and the Aaronites who had been expelled from the Temple might officiate with him. Everything appeared favourable to his design. His desire of worshipping the God of Israel, and his ambition of being at the head of an exclusive community, could easily be satisfied.

Thus on the summit of the fruitful Mount Gerizim, at the foot of the city of Shechem, in the very heart of the land of Palestine, Sanballat built his Temple, probably after the death of Artaxerxes (420).

The Aaronites who had been expelled from Jerusalem and who were well versed in all the tenets of the Law, had selected this site because they knew that, according to the Book of Deuteronomy, the blessings were to be pronounced from that mount upon the followers of the Law of Moses. But the Samaritans gave to the old words a new interpretation. They called, and still call to this day, Mount Gerizim "the Mount of Blessings," as if blessing and salvation proceeded from the mount itself. Even the town of Shechem they called "Blessing" (Mabrachta). Sanballat, or the priests of this temple of Gerizim, declared that the mixed race of the Samaritans were not descendants of the exiles

taken into that country by an Assyrian king, but that, on the contrary, they were true Israelites, a remnant of the Ten Tribes or of the tribes of Joseph and Ephraim. There may have truly been amongst them some descendants of these families, who, after the destruction of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, clung to Samaria; but that the numerous Cuthæans who gathered round Sanballat, in addition to the Ammonites and the Arabians, were justified in calling themselves descendants of Joseph and Ephraim and Israelites, was one of those ingenious and audacious fictions which, from their very exaggeration, stagger even those who are thoroughly convinced of their falsehood. Their language, however, betrayed their mixed origin; it was a conglomeration of Aramaic and of other foreign elements, and it was thus impossible to define from what stock they sprang.

But the venture was a successful one. The Samaritans had their temple, around which they gathered; they had priests from the house of Aaron; they compared Mount Gerizim, as they called their holy mount, to Mount Moriah; they drew the inference from the Book of the Law that God had designed Mount Gerizim as a site for a sanctuary, and they proudly called themselves Israelites. Sanballat and his followers being intent upon attracting a great many Judæans to their community, tempted them with the offer of houses and land, and in every way helped to support them. Those who had been guilty of crime and who feared punishment, were received with open arms by the Samaritans. Out of such elements a new semi-Judæan community or sect was formed. Their home was in the somewhat limited district of Samaria, the centre of which was either the city that gave its name to the province or the town of Shechem. The members of the new community became an active, vigorous, intelligent

people, as if Sanballat, the founder, had breathed his spirit into them. In spite of its diminutive size, this sect has continued until the present day. The existence of the Samaritans, as a community, may really be considered a signal victory of the Judæan faith, for it was religion alone that kept so mixed a people together; it became the bright star of their lives, to which they remained faithful, in spite of opposition and adverse destiny. The Samaritans treated the Torah brought to them by exiled priests, with as much reverence as the Judæans did, and regulated their religious and social life according to its requirements. But, in spite of all this similarity, the Judæans took no pleasure in this accession to their community of a people who had accepted their own teachings. This first Judæan sect caused them as much sorrow as the one which, at a later period, was developed from their race. The Samaritans were not only their bitterest foes, but they actually tried to argue away the right of the Judæans to exist as a community. They declared that they alone were the descendants of Israel, and they denied the sanctity of Jerusalem and its Temple, affirming that everything achieved by the Judæan people was a debasement of the old Israelite character. The Samaritans were ever on the alert to see if events were taking place in Judæa by which they might gain any advantage for themselves, and, had it but been in their power, they would have entirely destroyed the people whom they were closely imitating. Upon the Judæan side, the hatred against their Samaritan neighbours was equally great. They called them "the abandoned people who lived in Shechem." The enmity between Jerusalem and Samaria that existed in the time of the two kingdoms blazed out anew; it no longer bore a political character, but one of a religious tendency, and was therefore the more violent and passionate.

The existence of the Samaritan sect had, meanwhile, a stimulating effect upon the Judæans: as they continually came into collision with their opponents, and were obliged to listen to doctrines in the highest degree distasteful to them, they were forced to keep watch over their own actions in order to understand their own inmost being, and the Samaritans helped them in this self-study. What was it that distinguished them not only from a heathen world, but also from those neighbours who, like themselves, worshipped the one God and acknowledged the same Revelation? It was thus the thought that they possessed a peculiar creed became confirmed in them, as also the true idea of "Judaism," when they beheld their own counterparts. Judaism no longer implied a *nationality*, but a religious *conviction*. The name "Judæan" lost its racial distinction, and was used for any member of the Israelite community, were he a descendant of Judah or Benjamin, an Aaronite or a Levite. A Judæan was required to believe implicitly that the Torah was the direct revelation from God, given to the children of Israel through the mediation of Moses.

The reverence and love with which it came to be treated after the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, was as complete as had been the indifference of the people in general to the Sacred Book in earlier times. "A wise man trusts the Law, and the Law is as true as the words of the truth-giving Urim and Thummim." The Torah was looked upon as the quintessence of all wisdom, and was honoured as such. Hebrew poetry, still full of life, glorified it with enthusiastic praise. It followed naturally that the Torah became the corner-stone of the little State or Commonwealth of Judah. Before a Judæan undertook or desisted from any action he would ask whether he was abiding by Holy Writ. Slavery

amongst his own people came to an end; even if a Judæan wished to sell himself as a slave he could not find a buyer. Therefore the year of Jubilee, intended as a year of release to slaves, became an unnecessary institution. On the other hand, the Sabbatical year was strictly kept. The debts of the poor were then cancelled, and the fields lay fallow. Probably the Judæan favourites at the Persian Court had already demanded that, in the Sabbatical year, they might be exempt from paying taxes upon the produce of their fields. The poor were treated with great commiseration, for the Pentateuch declared that there should be no needy in the land. Almsgiving was looked upon in this new order of things as the highest virtue. In every town, members of the Judæan community were appointed to occupy themselves with the giving of alms. The constant complaints of the prophets and psalmists concerning the hard-heartedness displayed by the Judæans towards the poor and the helpless would no longer have been justified. Justice was admirably administered, and so conscientiously was it carried out that the Judæan law-officers might have been held up as models to the rest of the world. Twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays, which were market days, public courts of justice were held in all large towns.

It was most natural that as the life of the community was regulated according to the commands of the Torah, the spiritual leaders of the people should have devised a supreme court of justice, possessing the power to make and enforce laws, which was founded upon scriptural authority. For they were but carrying out the words of Deuteronomy, in which was enjoined the establishment of a superior court of justice, where a final and irrevocable decision in doubtful cases could be given. The question now arose as to how many

members should constitute this court. Seventy elders had shared with Moses the great burden of his duties, the representatives of seventy great families of the children of Israel. It was therefore decided that the supreme tribunal and high court of justice should number seventy elders. This peculiar assembly, that lasted until the destruction of the Judæan Commonwealth and became the strict upholder of the Law, played an important part in history, and was doubtless called into life at this period. At what other time could it have arisen? Thus the great assembly that Nehemiah had appointed, whose members were administrators of public affairs, developed into a lasting body or council for settling all religious and social questions. The seventy members of the supreme council were probably chosen from various great families. The high priest, whether he was worthy of the dignity or not, was placed at their head. The president was called "father of the tribunal" (Ab Beth-din). When the council was formed it proceeded to follow out and to carry into effect what Ezra and Nehemiah had begun, namely, the application of Judaism or the Law to the life and customs of the people. This supreme council brought about an entire revolution.

All the changes which we notice two hundred years later in the Judæan Commonwealth were its work, the new regulations that tradition assigns to Ezra, and which were known under the name of Sopheric regulations (Dibre Sopherim) were the creations of this body. It laid a sure foundation for the edifice that was to last a thousand years. Above all, it instituted regularly appointed readings from the Law; on every sabbath and on every week day a portion from the Pentateuch was to be read to the assembled congregation. Twice a week, when the country people came up from the villages to market in the neighbouring towns, or to appeal

at the courts of justice, some verses of the Pentateuch, however few, were read publicly. At first only the learned were allowed to read, but at last it was looked upon as so great an honour to belong to the readers, that every one attempted or desired to do so. Unfortunately the characters in which the Torah was written were hardly readable. Until that date the text of the Torah had been written in the ancient style with Phœnician or old Babylonian characters, which could only be deciphered by practised scribes. For the Judæans in Persia, even more than for the Judæans in Palestine, the Torah was a book with seven seals. It was therefore necessary to transform the old-fashioned characters of the Hebrew writing (Khetab Ibrith) into others, which were familiar to the inhabitants of the land between the Euphrates and Tigris. This new or modernised writing which was employed by the Judæans of Palestine and of the Persian provinces, was also used in the texts of the Torah, and of the other sacred books. In order to distinguish it from the old writing, it was called the Assyrian (Khetab Ashurith), because it was developed in one of the Assyrian provinces. The Samaritans, out of a spirit of contradiction, retained the old Hebrew characters for their book of the Pentateuch, so as to reproach their opponents with having introduced a forbidden novelty, and with having falsified the Torah. Until the present day, their holy writ exists in these old-fashioned characters, so that it is a closed book even to most of their priests.

From the constant reading of the Law, there arose among the Judæans an intellectual activity and vigour, which at last gave a special character to the whole nation. The Torah became their spiritual and intellectual property, and their own inner sanctuary. At this time there sprang up other important institutions, namely, schools,

where the young men could stimulate their ardour and increase their knowledge of the Law and its teachings. The intellectual leaders of the people continually enjoined on the rising generation, "Bring up a great many disciples." And what they enjoined so strenuously they themselves must have assisted to accomplish. One of these religious schools (Beth-Waad) was probably established in Jerusalem. The teachers were called scribes (Sopherim) or wise men; the disciples, pupils of the wise (Talmide Chachamim). The wise men or scribes had a twofold work; on the one hand they had to explain the Torah, and on the other, to make the laws applicable to each individual and to the community at large. This supplementary interpretation was called "explanation" (Midrash); it was not altogether arbitrary, but rested upon certain rules laid down for the proper interpretation of the law. The supreme council and the houses of learning worked together, and one completed the other.

A hardly perceptible, but most important movement was the result; for the descendants of the Judæans of that age were endowed with a characteristic, which they might otherwise have claimed as inborn, the talent for research and the intellectual penetration, needed for turning and returning words and data, in order to discover some new and hidden meaning. The supreme council that gave birth to these institutions and to this new movement, did not confine itself to the interpretation of the existing laws, and to their application to daily life, but it also drew up its own code of laws, which were to regulate, to stimulate and to establish the religious and social life of the people. There was an old maxim of great repute in Judæa: "Make a fence to the Law." By this maxim the teacher of the Law was enjoined to forbid certain

innocent things that touched too closely upon the forbidden points, or that might be mistaken for them. This method of guarding against any possible infringement of the law, by means of a "fence" (Seyag) had its justification in the careless unsettled habits of these early days. It was absolutely necessary that the mass of the people, who were wholly uneducated, should accustom themselves to the performance of the precepts and duties enjoined by the law.

An entire set of laws belonging to the Sopheric age was developed from a fear of violating the commands of the Torah. For instance, the degrees of relationship considered lawful for matrimony were increased in number; the violation of chastity was most carefully prevented, and men were forbidden to hold private interviews with married women in solitary places. The loose way in which the Sabbath was observed in Nehemiah's age, led to an extraordinary outburst of sabbatarianism. In order to prevent any possible violation of the Sabbath or of the festival days, all work was to cease at sunset on the preceding evening, and an official was appointed to proclaim, by the blast of a horn, the proper hour for repose. The Sabbath day and the festivals were intended to obliterate for the time being the cares and the troubles of the working days, and to create a serene frame of mind in the observers of the law. It was partly to express this that it became a custom of these days to drink a goblet of wine at the coming in and going out of the festivals, and to pronounce a blessing upon them, declaring that those days were holy, dedicated to God (Kiddush), and that they had a peculiar significance in contradistinction to the working days (Habdalah). By laws such as these, which were not permitted to remain a dead letter, the Sabbath acquired a holy character.

The first evening of the Paschal feast, falling as it always does in the spring time, was invested with its own special significance. It was intended to arouse and to keep alive throughout the year to come a grateful remembrance of the deliverance from Egypt, and the enjoyment of a precious freedom. It was either obligatory or customary to drink four glasses of wine upon this festival of rejoicing, and even the poorest managed to obtain this draught "that rejoices the heart." On the eve of the Passover, the members of each family, with their most intimate friends, gathered socially round the table, not to indulge in a luxurious meal, but to thank and praise the God of their fathers; they ate bitter herbs, broke unleavened bread, tasted some of the Paschal lamb in commemoration of their freedom, and they drank the goblet of wine to inaugurate this bright festival with a cheerful heart. Gradually it became a religious institution that the Paschal eve should be ushered in by these family and friendly gatherings, and that the lamb should be eaten by an assembly (Chaburah). Psalms were always sung upon these occasions, and the Passover evening came to be considered in the light of a genial family festival.

The prayers prescribed on Sopheric authority had no hard and fast form, but the line of thought they contained was in a certain sense laid down for them. The form of prayer used in the Temple became the model of the services in all prayer-houses, or houses of gathering (Beth-ha-Keneseth). Divine service was performed at early morning in a court of the Temple, and commenced with one or more specially selected Psalms of praise and thanksgiving. At the conclusion of the Psalms, the whole congregation exclaimed: "Praise be to the God of Israel, who alone doeth wonders, and praised be the glory of His name for ever and ever, and may

His glory fill the whole earth;" upon which followed a prayer of thanksgiving for the light of the sun, that God had given to the whole world, and for the light of the Law, that He had given to Israel. This was succeeded by the reading of several portions from the Torah, the Ten Commandments, the Schema: "The Lord God of Israel, the Lord our God is one;" the whole congregation adding these words: "Blessed be the name of the glory of His Kingdom for ever and ever." The principal prayer, the Tephillah, was composed of six short parts: a thanksgiving that God had chosen the children of Israel as His servants; an acknowledgment of the divine power in nature, showing itself in lifegiving rain; of the divine power in man, evinced in the future resurrection of the dead from their graves; an acknowledgment of the Holiness of God; a supplication for the accomplishment of all prayers and for the acceptance of sacrifice; a thanksgiving for the preservation of life and a prayer for peace, which was followed by the blessing of the priest. In the afternoon and evening, the congregation assembled again for prayer, but the service was short, as the Psalms and chapters of the Law were omitted.

On the Sabbath and festival days, the morning service was not materially different, except that one particular prayer was interpolated, in which special mention was made of the sanctity of the day, and a longer portion from the Torah was read at its close. In time a portion from the prophets, especially a chapter bearing upon the character of the day, was read. The opposition in which the Judæans stood to the Samaritans, prompted this reading from the prophets. For the Samaritans, who denied the sanctity of the Temple and of Jerusalem, omitted the prophetical writings, because they contained such constant allusions to

the holy city and the chosen sanctuary. So much the more necessary did it appear to the upholders of Judaism to let these writings be heard. In consequence of this regulation, the words of those prophets who had but rarely been listened to while they still lived, were now read in every Judæan house of prayer, and though they were but partially understood by the greater number of the congregation, nevertheless they became mighty levers to arouse the enthusiasm of the nation. As these readings ended the morning service, they were called "the end" (Haphtarah). It thus became necessary to make a collection of the prophetic writings, striking out some of the books, and including others. This choice was probably made by the lawgivers of the Sopheric age. The collection embraced the four historical books, Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, which were called the older prophetical works; then came three books, great in interest, bearing the names of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel; and lastly the twelve minor prophets, Hosea, Amos, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah and Malachi. The works of these prophets were all recognised as Holy Writ, but were placed after the Torah, on the second rung of the ladder of holiness.

In this way the divine service of the Sopheric age was constructed; it was simple and edifying, it contained nothing superfluous, disturbing or wearying, and it grew out of the thoughts, out of the very spirit of those time-honoured treasures, the writings of the prophet and the psalmist. It contained only one foreign element, the hope and the belief in the resurrection of the dead from their graves on the last day. With this exception everything was taken from the pure spring of the earliest teachings.

The inhabitants of the country towns introduced

amongst their own congregations an exact copy of the divine service as it was conducted in Jerusalem, for which they did not even require the autocratic voice of the Law. Thus in each town, houses of prayer (Synagogues, Maade-El) were established, in which prayers were read as they exist now, which have become the groundwork of the divine service of the present day. Besides the prayers, sacrifices were offered up according to the letter of the Law. These two forms of divine service were blended into one; they completed and helped one another. The spiritual service took place at rather a later hour than the offerings; three times during the day, whilst the priests were offering up their sacrifices, the congregations assembled in the prayer-houses, but on Sabbath and on festival days, when special sacrifices were offered up in the Temple (Korban Mussaph) the congregation assembled four times for prayer (Tephillath Mussaph). But even the sacrifices were accompanied by the living Word, and grew as it were more spiritual, for it became customary to sing the Psalms at intervals between the offerings, so great an influence did the sublime poetry possess.

There was however one very prominent feature connected with the Temple and the sacrifices which was opposed to the essentially spiritual tendency of the prophetic and psalmistic poetry. It was that which related to the laws concerning purity and impurity. The Law of the Torah had certainly given very precise regulations on these matters; an unclean person could not bring offerings, or approach the sanctuary or even taste consecrated food. There were many degrees of uncleanness, and the Law prescribed how unclean persons might be purified. The last act of purification always consisted in bathing in fresh running water. These laws would never have

attained such far-spreading and extraordinary importance had it not been for the sojourn of the Judæans during so many centuries in Persia, where the inhabitants observed with the utmost rigour all the laws on purification, which they carried into effect with scrupulous care. These laws, according to the Iranian Avesta of the Persians, whose priests were Magians, were as strict as they were revolting, and the Judæans lived surrounded by these Magians whilst they were under Persian rule. The Judæans were well aware that much of their teaching bore a striking resemblance to that of the Magians.

The fundamental conception of the Deity, as of one incorporeal perfect God, was so firmly implanted in the heart of every Judæan, that not one man would allow himself to be influenced by the conception of the Persian god of light Ahura-Mazda (Ormuzd), however spiritual that conception might be. Then seers, full of penetration, speedily divined the great error of the Iranian doctrine of acknowledging two great rival powers, the god of light and goodness, and the god of darkness and sin, Angro-Mainyus (Ahriman). They contrasted that doctrine with their own belief, that the God of Israel created light and darkness, good and evil. They denied that the world and mankind are being perpetually drawn in divergent directions by two rival powers, but affirmed that man is destined to live at peace and in unity. The spiritual leaders of the Judæans in the Sopheric age expressed this belief in one of the morning prayers: "God is the Creator of light and of darkness, He has created peace and has made everything." But although the Judæans resisted any alteration in their conception of the Deity, still they could not prevent many of the ideas and customs of the Persians from gaining ground among the nation. They imagined that they were

adding to the glory of God if, in imitation of the Iranians, they surrounded Him with myriads of obedient servants. The "messengers of God," whom we read of in the Bible as beings sent to execute His will, became, according to the doctrine of Persia, heavenly creatures, endowed with peculiar characteristics and special individuality. The people pictured to themselves the heavenly throne, surrounded by a countless throng of heavenly beings, or angels, awaiting a sign to do the bidding of God. "A thousand thousand served Him, and a myriad myriad stood around Him." Like the Persians, the Judæans called the angels "the holy watchers" (Irin-Kadishin). The angels received special names: Michael, Gabriel, the strong, Raphael, the healer, Uriel or Suriel, Matatoron, and others.

As the imagination of Yazatas had given the angels a Hebrew character and Hebrew names, so did it also introduce the bad spirits, or Daevas, among the Judæans. Satan was a copy of Angro-Mainyus, but he was not placed in juxtaposition to the God of Israel, for this would not have been permitted by the Judæans. He, the holy One, high and mighty and all powerful, could not be rendered less great, or approached in any way by one of His own creations. But still the first step had been taken, and Satan, strong and powerful like his Iranian prototype, was placed in his own kingdom of darkness, where he reigned as the supreme power of evil. Whoever created Satan according to the ideal Angro-Mainyus must have given him a host of attendant demons, bad spirits (Shedim, Mazikim, Malache Chabalah), some of whom had individual characteristics. One demon, Ashmodai, Samael, was at the head of a troop of persecuting spirits; another was an angel of death, with a thousand eyes, lying in ambush, ready to seize upon men's lives (Malach-ha-Maveth). The Judæans soon adopted

these creatures of the imagination, and with them many of the beliefs and customs of the Magians. It was supposed, for instance, that during sleep, a spirit often rested upon the hands of the sleeper, therefore a maxim enforced washing of the hands upon awaking. The laws of purification became stricter than ever, after the example of the Persians.

It was at that time that a new law of compensation, or of eternal recompense, was developed. By this law, the universe was divided into two great kingdoms; those of light and darkness; the pure, or worshippers of Ahura-Mazda, were admitted into the region of light (Paradise), and the wicked, the followers of Angro-Manyus, into the kingdom of darkness (Hell). After death, the soul remained during three days near the body it had tenanted; then, according to its life upon earth, it was taken by the Yazatas to Paradise, or was drawn down by the Daevas into Hell. This idea of retribution after death was adopted by the Judæans. The garden of Eden (Gan-Eden) where the story of the Creation placed the first human beings whilst they lived in a state of innocence, was transformed into Paradise, and the valley of Hinnom (Ge-Hinnom) in which, since the days of Ahaz, sacrifices of children had been offered up, gave the name to the newly-created Hell. In what way could such new beliefs have crept into the Judæan faith? We cannot explain this any more than we can explain how the pores of a human being become impregnated with an illness that has poisoned the atmosphere. But the doctrines of angels, of Satan, and his attendant spirits, of Paradise and of Hell, did not become actual articles of faith, which it would be mortal sin to doubt, but on the contrary, during that time, and in all future time, each individual was permitted to accept or to reject this doctrine. Only one belief emanating from the Iranian religion became part

of the spiritual life of the Judæans, until it grew at last to be a binding dogma; it was that of the resurrection of the dead from their graves. The Magians had taught and insisted upon this doctrine. They imagined a future day when Ahura-Mazda would have destroyed and conquered his rival, when the god of darkness would have to give up the bodies of the "pure men" which he had stolen. The Judaism of the Sopheric age adopted this hopeful and satisfactory doctrine all the more readily, as allusions to it existed in the Judaic writings. The prophets had constantly made references to the day of the last judgment, and the scribes inferring that the resurrection of the dead was meant, had made it an article of faith amongst their people.

In the daily prayer it became customary to praise God for awakening the dead to life. When the Judæan nation was struggling with death, a seer of the time exclaimed to the sufferers:—

"Many of those who are sleeping in dust will awake, some to eternal life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

In this manner a peculiar doctrine of retaliation, with a brilliant picture of the future, or of the next world (Olam ha-Ba), was evolved. A magical world unfolded itself to the eye, almost intoxicating to the believer. For the time would come when all discords of life would change into harmony, when all disappointments would vanish, when the pious, the faithful, and the just, who had suffered so much upon earth, would rise from their graves and enter on eternal life in purity and in peace. Even the sinners who had only erred out of frivolity and weakness, would be purified by penitence in Hell, and would enjoy the pleasures of eternal life. But how was this resurrection to take place, and how was this beautiful new world to be organised? No imagination could find an answer to such a question. Fervent faith and enthusiastic hope hardly descend

to explanations. It is enough that they come with the consoling certainty of a future life and just recompense; that they assuage sorrow and soften regret, called forth by the hard adversities of daily life. Although Judaism received the essence of this teaching from the stranger, yet the power of enriching it, and of endowing it with the faculty of working immeasurable good, came from within. In fact, the origin of this belief became at last unknown, and it was considered as an original Judæan doctrine. Only the Samaritans objected for a considerable time to the belief of the resurrection and to the idea of a future life.

During this long period of nearly two hundred years, while the Judæan Community established itself, and Judaism became developed by the enlargement of her own doctrines and the adoption of foreign elements—from the death of Nehemiah to the destruction of the Persian kingdom—we do not find a single name mentioned of any personage who assisted in that great work, which was to outlive and defy the storms of ages. Was it from excess of modesty that the spiritual leaders of the people, with whom the new order of things had originated, thus concealed themselves in obscurity, or from their desire to veil the personal influence to which that new order owed its birth? Or is it the ingratitude of posterity that has effaced these names? Or, again, were the members of the Great Council not sufficiently gifted or remarkable to merit any particular distinction, and was the Community indebted for its vigour, and Judaism for its growth and development, entirely to the public zeal in which every individual will was completely absorbed? Whatever was the cause, the astonishing fact remains that of these long stretches of time but few details have become known to us. Either no annals were kept of the events of those years, or they have been lost. It is true there were

no very remarkable events to describe, the activity of the Judæan Community being entirely employed upon itself, and wholly devoted to its own growth and development, which did not then appear of sufficient importance to be chronicled for posterity. There was indeed but little for the historian to write about: a stranger might perhaps have been struck by the changes which were gradually unfolding themselves, but to those who lived and worked in the Community, what was there of a peculiar or extraordinary nature which would deserve to be perpetuated in history?

The Judæan people occupied themselves almost entirely with peaceful avocations; they understood but little of the use of arms; perhaps not even enough to preserve their own territories against the attacks of their neighbours. The prophet Ezekiel had described what the condition of the Jews would be after their return from captivity.

"In the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword and is gathered out of many people against the mountains of Israel." (Ezek. xxxviii. 8.)

A peaceful, quiet existence naturally withdraws itself from curious observation. In the wars which were often raging on their borders, the Judæan people certainly took no part. Under Artaxerxes II., surnamed Mnemon (404-362) and under Artaxerxes III., surnamed Ochus (361-338), the discontented Egyptians, some of whom called themselves kings, endeavoured to free their country from the Persian yoke, and to restore it to its former independence. In order to be enabled to offer effectual resistance to the armies collected for the purpose of putting down these insurrections, the ephemeral kings of Egypt joined the Persian satraps of Phœnicia, to whom Judæa had also been allotted. Persian troops often passed along the Judæan coasts of the Mediterranean towards Egypt, or Egyptians

towards Phœnicia, and Greek mercenaries, hired by either power, marched to and fro, and all this warlike array could be constantly observed by the Judæans from their mountain-tops. They did not always remain mere passive spectators; for though they were not compelled to join the armies, they were certainly not exempt from various charges and obligations. The relations between the Judæans and the Persians became at the same time somewhat embittered. The latter, influenced by foreign example, began to practise idolatry. The goddess of love, who, under the different names of Beltis, Mylitta, or Aphrodite, was constantly brought under the notice of the Persians, exercised a fascinating power over them. The victories they had achieved and the riches they had acquired, inclined them to sensual gratifications, and they were easily enthralled by the goddess, and induced to serve and worship her. As soon as they had adopted this new deity they gave her a Persian name, Anahita, Anaitis, and included her in their mythology. Artaxerxes II. sanctioned her worship, and had images of her placed everywhere in his great kingdom, in the three principal cities, Babylon, Susa, and Ecbatana, as well as in Damascus, Sardes, and in all the towns of Persia and Bactria. Through this innovation the Persian religion sustained a double injury. A strange deity was admitted, and image-worship introduced. Thus likewise the spiritual link which had bound the Persians to the followers of Judaism, their common abhorrence of idolatry, was broken. No longer was pure incense offered to the incorporeal God of the Judæans. Having compelled his own people to bow down to this goddess, Artaxerxes tried, as it appears, to enforce her worship upon the Judæans; the latter were cruelly treated, in order to make them renounce their religion, but they preferred the worst punishments, and even

death itself, rather than to abjure the faith of their fathers. It is related that after his war with the Egyptians and their king Tachos (361-360), Artaxerxes banished many Judæans from their country, and sent them to Hyrkania, on the shores of the Caspian Sea. If this account may be considered historical, the banishment of the Judæans must surely have been a mode of persecution inflicted upon them on account of their fidelity to their laws and their God; for it is hardly to be supposed that they took any part in the revolt against Persia, which was then spreading from Egypt to Phœnicia. In Jerusalem there was much suffering at that time, caused by one of those abject creatures, who, owing to the growing degeneracy of the Persian Court and increasing weakness of the kingdom, raised himself from the dust, and ruled both the country and the throne. This was the eunuch Bagoas (Bagoses), who under Artaxerxes III. became so powerful that he was able to set aside the king, and fill the throne according to his own pleasure. Before attaining this supreme position, Bagoas had been the commander of the troops stationed in Syria and Phœnicia, and he had taken advantage of the opportunities thus offered him to acquire great riches. He received bribes from Joshua, the ambitious son of the high priest, who hoped thus to secure that post for himself. Joshua had an elder brother, Jochanan, and both were sons of Joiada, one of whose relations, having connected himself with Sanballat, had been banished from Jerusalem by Nehemiah; he it was who introduced the rival worship on Mount Gerizim. After the death of Joiada, the younger son, trusting to the countenance of Bagoas, came forward to seize the high priest's diadem. The elder brother was enraged at this assumption, and a strife, which ended in bloodshed, took place between the two in the Temple

itself. A sad omen for the future! Upon hearing what had occurred at Jerusalem, the eunuch instantly proceeded thither, not to avenge the death of Joshua, but, under the pretext of awarding a well-deserved punishment, to extort money for himself. For each lamb that was daily offered in the Temple, the people were ordered to pay 50 drachms as expiatory money, and this sum was to be brought every morning, before the sacrifice was performed. Bagoas also violated the law which forbade any layman to enter the Sanctuary, and when the priest, pointing to the prohibitory decree, tried to prevent his entrance to the Temple, he asked, mockingly, if he was not as pure as the son of the high priest, who was murdered there?

The people paid the expiatory money for seven years, when, from some cause, they were freed from their burden. The disfavour into which the Judæan nation had fallen with the last Persian king, was turned to account by their malevolent neighbours. The Samaritans, after injuring them to their utmost power, appear to have regained by force or cunning the border lands, Ramathaim, Apherema and Lydda, which they had formerly been obliged to quit. The Judæans were at this time all compelled to fight for their existence. Few and brief had been the glimpses of light which had brightened the annals of the Judæan Community during the last two hundred years! This light had illumined the first enthusiastic days of the return from captivity during the reign of Darius, who showered favours upon them, and during the time of Nehemiah's presence and zealous activity at Jerusalem. With these exceptions their lot was oppression, poverty and pitiable helplessness. They appear to us in their sadness and misery to be ever asking with tearful, uplifted eyes, "From whom shall help come to

us," and traces of this helplessness and misery are visible in the writings that have come down from that period. While the exile lasted, the grief and the longing, which kept the captives in constant and breathless expectation, had brought forth the fairest blossoms of prophecy and poetry; but as soon as the excitement ceased, and hope became a reality, the mental and poetical activity diminished. The later prophetical utterances, if beauty of form be considered, cannot bear comparison with those of the Captivity. The poetry of the Psalms became weak and full of repetitions, or else borrowed the bloom of older productions. The graceful idyl of the book of Ruth forms an exception to the literature of this period. Historical writings were from easily explained causes completely neglected. Ezra and Nehemiah had only given a short and unpolished account of the occurrences they had witnessed. Quite at the end of this epoch, towards the close of the Persian dominion, it appears that a Levite compiled a historical work (Chronicles), narrating the events from the Creation down to his own time. During the life of the author of the annals, or shortly after he had finished his history, a new period dawned, which gave rise to fresh mental exertions among the Judæans, and brought forth proofs of their capacity and worth.

This new period was ushered in by the Greeks. They wrought a thorough change in the manners, customs and thoughts of other nations, and materially raised the scale of civilisation among the various peoples then known in the world. The diffusion of this civilisation, however, which was the consequence of the acquisition of political power and widespread conquest, was owing, not to a purely Greek race, but to a mixed people of Greeks and Barbarians, namely, the Macedonians. The grace and charm of the Greeks have caused their

faults to be leniently regarded by mankind, but they were not overlooked by the Ruler of the world, and their sins brought retributive punishment upon them. Advantage was easily taken of their mutual jealousies, their many foibles, their restless, unruly disposition, and Greece was apt to follow the example set to it by its rulers, and fall a prey to any ambitious leader who was an adept in the art of intoxicating flattery, lavish with his gold, and supported by martial force. Such was the case with Philip, king of Macedon, who dazzled all with his cunning and his wealth, his valour and his army. All Greece lay at his feet, but petty feelings of jealousy continued to exist among the people, and to counteract any common action. The king proposed, as a satisfaction to their national pride, that a war should be undertaken against Persia, in which they might at once punish the latter for inroads upon their country, and win fame and booty for themselves. Some of the States were not to be influenced, and refused to send delegates to the assembly; whilst other States, or their representatives, had to be bribed to give their consent to the proposed plan. Philip's project of war against Persia was cut short by the hand of an assassin. Then appeared his son, the great Alexander, who was destined to remodel entirely the relations of the various countries, and to draw the peaceful inhabitants of Judæa into the vortex of the great world conflicts. New troubles and new trials were brought upon the Judæan people by the convulsions suffered from one end of the known world to the other. A Judæan seer compared Alexander to a leopard endowed with the wings of an eagle. In two battles he gave to the rotten Persian monarchy its death blow; Asia Minor, Syria, and Phœnicia lay at his feet, and kings and princes, attired in all their pomp, did homage to the conqueror. Tyre and Gaza, the one

after a seven months', the other after a two months' siege, were both taken (August and November, 332), and met with a cruel fate.

How did the insignificant dominion of Judæa fare under the invincible hero before whom Egypt, the proud land of the Pharaohs, had fallen humbly prostrate? The historical records of those times have only come down to us in the form of legends, and consequently give us no authentic account of the passing events. Doubtless, the Judæans were not prevented from doing homage to Alexander through fear of incurring any guilt by breaking their oath to their Persian rulers. It is not even certain that an oath of fealty had actually been taken, but even in such case, the Judæans, after the manner in which they had been treated by the last Persian kings, would not have felt much remorse in breaking it. There is no doubt that the story of Alexander's vision, and the favours which he consequently heaped upon the Judæans, rests upon a legend. The High Priest, so it is related, dressed in his holy garments, followed by a troop of priests and Levites, went forth to meet the youthful warrior, and produced so great and extraordinary an effect upon him, that his anger was at once changed into kindness and good will. The explanation given by Alexander to his followers was that the High Priest thus attired had appeared to him in a dream which he had in Macedonia, and had promised him victory. According to one legend, it was the High Priest Jaddua, according to another, his grandson Simon, who produced this effect upon the Macedonian hero. In reality, the meeting between Alexander and the envoys of the Judæan community no doubt passed simply and naturally enough. The High Priest, perhaps Onias I., Jaddua's son and Simon's father, went forward with a suite of the elders, like the kings and princes around, to do homage and swear alle-

giance to the conqueror. Alexander was of a noble and generous disposition, often punishing cruelly any resistance to his will, but leaving to all nations who accepted his sway the enjoyment of their property, their customs and their religion. He did not force the Grecian faith on any nation, and the favour which he granted to other nations, he certainly did not deny to the Judæans. They were only obliged to pay the Macedonian governor the same tribute from their land as the Persian satrap had received.

The first interview between the representatives of Greece and Judæa, two peoples who in different ways were both to forward civilisation, was of a friendly description. The one advanced in all his glory and might, the other in his weakness and humility. Judæa became part of a province, which was bounded on the north by Mount Taurus and Mount Lebanon, and on the south by Egypt, and was called Lower Syria (Cœlesyria), to distinguish it from the Higher Syria, which lay in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates. The Governor of this extensive province, which had formerly been divided into many independent states, resided in Samaria, which must consequently have been a fortified and populous town. Samaria, however, was indebted for this preference or dangerous elevation to its central position, and to the great fertility of its soil. Andromachos was the name of the governor whom Alexander placed over the Cœlesyrians. Why were the Samaritans displeased with this apparent distinction? Did they feel themselves hampered in their movements by the presence of the Governor, or was their anger roused by jealousy at the favour shown by Alexander to the Judæans, whom they hated so bitterly? The violent resentment of the Samaritans, or at least of their leaders, went so far, that heedless of the consequences, they rose up against Andromachus, seized him and consigned him to the

flames (331). Alexander's wrath, upon hearing of this act of atrocity which had been committed upon one of his generals, was as great as it was just. Had this small, insignificant people dared to defy one who had subdued all Egypt, the proud priests of which country had prostrated themselves before him, proclaiming his pre-eminence and his glory? Upon his return from Egypt, while hastening to conquer Persia, he hurried to Samaria to avenge the murder of Andromachus. The authors of the horrible deed were put to death under cruel tortures, another governor called Memnon was placed over Samaria, and the town was filled with Macedonians. In various other ways, Alexander appears to have mortified and humiliated the Samaritans, and knowing that they were enemies of the Judæans, he favoured the latter in order to mark his displeasure towards the former. Several border lands lying between Samaria and Judæa, which had often occasioned strife between the two people, he awarded to the Judæans, and likewise freed the latter from the burden of taxation during the Sabbath year. This favour, of small importance to him who gave it, was a great boon to those who received it, and inflamed the hatred of the Samaritans against the Judæans; every windfall seemed to add new fuel to their enmity, which, however, as long as Alexander lived, they were obliged to conceal. His wonderfully rapid and victorious campaigns—as far as the Indus and the Caucasus—seemed to throw a spell over the world, and to paralyse all independent action. When he was not at war, peace reigned supreme, from Greece to India, and from Ethiopia to the shores of the Caspian sea. Alexander was the first conqueror who deemed it a wise policy to allow the peculiar customs of any conquered nation to be maintained; he insisted that respect should be shown to their various religions and forms of worship. In Egypt he honoured Apis and Ammon,

and in Babylon the gods of Chaldæa. Thus he determined upon raising up the Temple of the Babylonian idol Bel, which had been thrown down by Artaxerxes. To accomplish this, he ordered his soldiers to clear away the ruins which had accumulated over the foundations of the building. All obeyed with the exception of the Judæans who, either voluntarily or by compulsion, were serving in his army. They refused their help towards the reconstruction of the idolatrous temple. Naturally enough, their disobedience received severe chastisement from their superior officers, but they bore their punishment bravely, rather than comply with an order which demanded the transgression of one of the principal injunctions of their faith. When Alexander heard of this case of conscience and of the religious fortitude displayed by the Judæan soldiers, he was generous enough to grant them his pardon. But in that incident we may read an omen of the conflicts which were to take place between Judaism and the spirit of Greece.

In the midst of his vast undertaking—that of uniting the whole world into one monarchy—the young hero died (323), leaving no lawful heir to his throne, no successor to his great mind. Confusion appeared in all parts of the earth, as well as among the armies of Alexander. All law, even that of Nature, seemed upset, so that the alternations of day and night seemed no longer a fixed law, and fearful battles, which resembled the wars of the Titans, ensued. Alexander's warriors, who had learnt experience on a thousand battlefields, would, had they only been united, have been capable of keeping together the structure of the Macedonian kingdom; but, although they were not actually Greeks, and even looked down upon the latter, they shared their spirit of insubordination, their want of discipline, and their passion for self-advancement, which greatly surpassed their zeal for

the good of the State. Like the Greeks, they coveted power as a means to obtain luxuries and enable them to indulge in licentious pleasures; in short, they had become adepts in all their moral corruptions.

The consequence of this state of things was the breaking asunder of the Macedonian kingdom and its division among the contending leaders. Ptolemy I. Soter, son of Lagos, reigned in Egypt. Through a successful war he acquired Cœlesyria, together with Judæa. In 320, he demanded the surrender of Jerusalem, but its inhabitants refused to open their gates. On a sabbath, however, he contrived to surprise the city, and, as the Judæans did not use their arms on that day, he was able to seize the city and to make numerous prisoners, whom he carried away to Egypt. Many Samaritans shared their fate, probably because they had likewise attempted resistance. Both Judæans and Samaritans could have enjoyed happiness—at least, as much happiness as those hard, cruel times allowed to any one—had they remained subjects of the Lagidian Ptolemy, who was the gentlest of the military followers of Alexander. He also knew how to recognise and appreciate merit, and when his own interests were at stake, he could be just and merciful; but Ptolemæus had no acknowledged right to the possession of Cœlesyria. His acquisition of those lands had not been confirmed by the various rulers of the kingdom who followed each other in rapid succession, and who kept up the semblance of a united government. Ptolemy roused the envy of the confederate captains, and in particular that of one of his former allies and fellow-conspirators, Antigonus. This bold soldier was endowed with an inventive genius and a fiery nature, and had resolved upon the subjection of all his associates, in order to seize and hold the whole kingdom of

Macedonia in his own strong hand. After many years of warlike preparations, a decisive battle at last took place between Demetrius, the son of Antigonus, and Ptolemy, which ended disastrously for the former. The battle of Gaza, fought in the spring of 312, was a memorable one, for from that event the power of Seleucus, who had come as a fugitive to Ptolemy, may be said to have commenced. Likewise this period was also noteworthy because of the new computation of time, called Seleucidæan Greek, which also came into use among the Judæans, and was long observed by them. In consequence of the defeat at Gaza, Demetrius was obliged to withdraw to the north, leaving the whole country to the conqueror. Only a short time elapsed, however, before Antigonus and his son, having joined their forces, compelled Ptolemy to retreat into Egypt. He caused the fortified sea-coast and inland cities, Acco, Joppa, Gaza, and Jerusalem to be demolished, so that they should not become places of refuge for his enemies, and Judæa, with the countries that belonged to Cœlesyria, remained in this unguarded condition until, in a battle at Ipsus, in Asia Minor (301), fought against the united armies of Ptolemy, Lysimachus, Cassander, and Seleucus, Antigonus lost at one blow both his glory and his life. The four generals divided the kingdom between themselves. Ptolemy received Egypt and the adjoining lands, and the greater part of Asia fell to Seleucus. Thus Judæa became a portion of the Ptolemæan or Lagidian kingdom, and its fate for a time was linked to the latter. The condition of the Judæans, however, underwent no material change. The tribute they had been obliged formerly to pay to the Persian monarch was now demanded by the Egyptian-Macedonian Court. The freedom and independence of their movements and actions were not more restricted than they had

hitherto been; on the contrary, their situation might be considered rather improved than otherwise.

In Judæa, the high priest, who was answerable for the payment of taxes, was considered as the political chief, and was looked upon as a sacerdotal prince. Ptolemy I. was endowed with a gentle nature, and inclined to benefit his subjects. He had neither any desire nor motive to oppress the Judæans. Alexandria, the seaport city founded by Alexander, and considered as the capital of his kingdom by the first Egyptian-Macedonian monarch, acquired a large population, and it could only be a source of satisfaction to him to see Judæans from the neighbouring country establishing themselves there. Under Alexander many Judæans had already settled in that city, and, as this far-seeing hero had given the same Macedonian rights to all comers, the first Judæan colony in Alexandria enjoyed perfect equality with its other inhabitants, and led a peaceful existence in the new land. A great number of Judæans took up their abode there during the disturbed state of their country, caused by the wars of Antigonus; they also received from Ptolemy protection and the enjoyment of equal laws and rights. And thus arose an Egyptian-Judæan community, which was destined to fulfil a peculiar mission. In other places also Judæan colonies were formed. Assured of the goodwill of the Judæans, Ptolemy distributed them among the various Egyptian cities and in Cyrene.

Seleucus, the founder of the Seleucidæan kingdom, the centre of which was situated in Persia, had likewise become possessor of the northern part of Syria, where he founded a new city, Antioch, which became his capital. In order to people this city, as well as other newly-built towns, he was obliged to bring inhabitants into them, and among these partly forced and partly willing settlers, were

many Judæans, to whom Seleucus gave the full rights of Macedonian citizenship. And, as Judæan colonies arose in the Greek-Macedonian countries, so also Greek colonies formed themselves upon Judæan ground. Along the Mediterranean coast new seaports were built, or old ones enlarged and embellished, and to these Grecian names were given.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### SIMON THE JUST AND HIS DESCENDANTS.

Condition of the Judæans under the Ptolemies—Simon effects Improvements—His Praises are Sung by Sirach—His Doctrines—The Chassidim and Nazirites—Simon's Children—Onias II. and the Revolt against Egypt—Joseph, son of Tobias—His Embassy to Alexandria—He is appointed Tax-collector—War between Antiochus the Great and Egypt—Defeat of Antiochus—Inroad of Greek Manners into Judæa—Hyrcanus—The Song of Songs—Simon II.—Scopas Spoils Jerusalem—The Contest between Antiochus and Rome—Continued Hellenization of the Judæans—The Chassidim and the Hellenists—Jose ben Joezer and Jose ben Jochanan—Onias III. and Simon—Heliodorus—Sirach's Composition against the Errors of his Time.

300-175 B.C.

For more than a century after the death of Nehemiah, the Judæan nation might have been represented in its inner life under the form of a caterpillar, which covers itself with a web in order to weave threads from the juices of its own body, and in its outer life under the form of a martyr, bearing insult and humiliation alike in silence. Until that date it had not produced any one man, who by his own strong individuality could be regarded as the great author of a new movement; no one had arisen capable of giving the Judæans direction and enthusiasm. The stimulus for development and improvement had always come from without, from the principal men of Persia or Babylon. But now the people were separated from their co-religionists of those lands in consequence of new political circumstances. The Judæans of the Euphrates and the Tigris could no longer carry on an active intercourse with their brethren in the

mother country. For the reigning dynasties, the Seleucidæ and the Ptolemies, looked upon one another with suspicion, and frequent visits of the Judæans from the province of the Seleucidæ, to the Judæans of Jerusalem, would have been unfavourably regarded in Alexandria. Had the nation not been able to rouse itself in its own country without extraneous help, it would have been lost; a people which cannot exist or improve of itself must sooner or later fall into insignificance. But the right man arose at the right time. He saved the Judæan community from its fall. This man was Simon the Just (about 300-270). In an age deficient in great men, he appears like a lofty and luxuriant tree in the midst of a barren country. Legendary lore has seized upon his name, and has added the marvellous to history. It is always a favourable testimony to an historical personage and to the influence he wields over a large circle, when tradition gives her voice in his favour. If authentic history does not tell us much of Simon I., still the few characteristics preserved to us portray him as a man of great distinction. He was moreover the one high priest of the house of Joshua ben Jozedek, of whom there was anything laudatory to relate, and the only high priest who restored the priesthood to honour. Under his care the nation could not collapse. He rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem which had been demolished by Ptolemy I., and he repaired the ravages of two centuries upon the Temple. He also carried out various measures for the safety and improvement of the capital. Amongst others he improved the several springs in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, whose supply of water would be insufficient in an unusually dry year, besides which the Temple required water in copious quantities. To meet these requirements, Simon caused a large reservoir to be excavated below the Temple, which was fed by a subterranean

canal, and brought a constant supply of fresh water from the springs of Etam. Thus there was no fear of drought, even in case of a siege. The poet, Joshua (Jesus) Sirach, who lived at a later date, gives us an enthusiastic description of Simon:—

"How was he honoured in the midst of the people in his coming out of the Sanctuary! He was as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at the full.

"As the sun shining upon the temple of the Most High, and as the rainbow giving light in the bright clouds.

"When he put on the robe of honour, and was clothed with the perfection of glory . . . . compassed with his brethren round about, as a young cedar in Lebanon." (Ecclus. l. 5-12.)

Not only was Simon the Just recognised in his office of high priest as head of the Community and of the Supreme Council, but he was also the chief teacher in the house of learning. He inculcated this maxim upon his disciples: The world, *i.e.*, the Judæan community, subsists on three things, the Law, the service in the Temple, and acts of love (Aboth i. 2). One may also ascribe to this remarkable man some share in the following saying of one of his most distinguished pupils, Antigonus of Socho, "Be not like those slaves, who serve their master for their daily subsistence, but be rather like the servants who faithfully serve their master without expectation of reward." Although Simon the Just attached great importance to the sacrificial rites, still he did not approve of the excessive zeal which was creeping into the community, and he did not try to conceal his disapprobation. There were amongst the nation, some over-pious people who took the vows of the Nazirite; they refrained from wine for a given time, and called themselves, or were called, the strictly pious, Chassidim. When the time of their probation had expired, they shaved off their hair and fulfilled all the sacrifices prescribed by law. Perhaps the Greeks, whose great love of pleasure found expression in their

numerous feasts and orgies, may have been a warning to the Judæans, and may have induced them to seek self-mortification. It is certain that as the number of mere pleasure-seekers increased in Judæa, so did also that of the Chassidim. But Simon the Just was not pleased with this ultra zeal, and took no part in the sacrifices of the Nazirites.

Posterity has formed so exalted an opinion of Simon's character, that his death has been looked upon as one of the concluding chapters of an historical period. Sad and terrible times, partly brought about by his own descendants and causing fresh trials to the Judæans, followed upon his death. Simon the Just left two children, a young son and a daughter. The latter was married to Tobiah, a somewhat distinguished man of priestly descent. The son, Onias, being too young to officiate as High Priest, a relative, named Manasseh, represented him during his minority. The rule of Onias II. became a turning-point in the history of the Judæans. The constant warfare carried on for years between the rival houses of the Seleucidæ and the Ptolemies affected the fate of Judæa.

Cœlesyria and Judæa had long remained loyal to Egypt, but the fourth king of the Seleucidæ, Antiochus Callinicos, instigated these provinces to revolt, and even tried to inveigle Onias II., the high priest and leader of the Judæans, into an open alliance. At this time Onias was refusing to pay the annual tax of twenty talents to the Ptolemies, a refusal that gave great offence at the Egyptian court. For although the sum was small, the payment was looked upon as a mark of submission. Ptolemy II., after vainly demanding the tribute money, threatened to divide the province amongst various foreign colonists. He despatched one of his own favourites, Athenion, as special envoy to Jerusalem. The Judæans in alarm and despair entreated Onias to submit, but he resisted their prayers.

When matters had come to this crisis, there suddenly appeared upon the scene, a man, Joseph by name, of extraordinary strength of will and purpose. He was the nephew of Onias, and son of the Tobiah who had married the daughter of Simon the Just. Fascinating in his manners, clever, cunning, and unscrupulous, the son of Tobiah seemed born to govern. Unfortunately for himself, Onias, the high priest and ruler of the State, stood in his path. But now was the moment, as he thought, to remove the obstacle. As soon as Joseph was told of the arrival of the Ptolemaic envoy in Jerusalem, and of his threatening message, he hastened from his birth-place to that city, loaded his uncle Onias with reproaches at having led his people into danger, and finding the high priest determined in his resistance, he offered to go himself to Alexandria, there to commence negotiations with the king of Egypt. As soon as Onias had empowered him to do so, Joseph assembled the people in the court of the Temple, soothed their excited feelings, and made them understand that they were to place entire confidence in him, for that he was in a position to avert the danger that threatened them. The whole assembly offered him their grateful thanks, and made him leader of the people (about 230). From that moment, Joseph displayed so much decision, that it was evident a plan had long been ripening in his brain. He was well aware of the weakness of the Greeks, and knew that they were not indifferent to flattery or to the luxuries of the table. So he prepared tempting banquets for Athenion, fascinating him by his charm of manner, making him costly presents, and assuring him that he might return to Egypt, secure of the tribute money, which he promised should be paid to the king. As soon as the envoy had left Jerusalem, Joseph entered into negotiations with some Samaritan friends, or money-lenders, to obtain a

loan for his necessary expenses. In order to appear with dignity at the Egyptian court, he required splendid apparel, brilliant equipages, and money to defray the cost of his entertainments. Joseph had no means of his own, and in all Judæa there was no one who could advance him large sums of money. The people supported themselves by agriculture, they were not engaged in commerce and at that time had no opportunity of amassing wealth.

Furnished with the means of making a great display at court, Joseph hurried to Alexandria, where the envoy Athenion had already prepared a favourable reception for him. Ptolemy Euergetes was anxiously expecting him, and was not disappointed when he arrived. He was enchanted with Joseph's bearing and address, and invited him to be his guest at the royal table. The envoys from the Palestinian and Phœnician cities, who formerly had derided his simple appearance, now remarked with envy upon his presence at court. He soon gave them occasion not only to envy but also to hate him. For by a crafty stroke, he managed to obtain a position of great trust, that of head tax-gatherer or satrap of Cœlesyria and Phœnicia. The king gave him a force of two thousand soldiers, who were, if necessary, to lend their aid in the execution of his duties, and Joseph became in reality the governor of all Palestine. He was respected and feared as a favourite of the king, and he therefore ventured to levy taxes with extreme severity. In the cities of Gaza and Beth-Shean (Scythopolis) the Greek inhabitants ventured to load him with bitter reproaches, and to offer resistance. In return he beheaded the noblest and richest of the citizens, and confiscated their possessions to the Egyptian crown. For twenty-two years, Joseph held the post of satrap, and spent that time in amassing extraordinary wealth and attaining great power.

After the death of Euergetes (223), his successor, Ptolemy IV., Philopator, (222-206,) retained him in office. He continued to act in the same heartless way, causing the following remark to be made in the presence of Philopator:—"Joseph is stripping the flesh from all Syria, and is only leaving the bones."

However, his lucky star seemed about to wane; for the Seleucidæan king, Antiochus, called by his flatterers The Great (223-187), attempted to wrest the province of Cœlesyria from Egypt (218). The commencement of the attack augured success. The Egyptian commanders were treacherous, they went over to the enemy, and betrayed the garrisons into their hands. Judæa and Jerusalem, under the satrapy of Joseph, remained true to Egypt. But how long would they be able to resist an attack of the Seleucidean army? And which side should Joseph take? He must have lived through that time in the most painful anxiety. At last the decisive hour struck. In the spring of 217, Antiochus appeared on the sea-coast near Gaza. He was at the head of a large army, composed of various nationalities. His direction was south, towards Egypt. Meanwhile, Philopator had roused himself from his life of ease and self-indulgence, and was advancing to meet his enemy, near Raphia. Antiochus, over-confident of success, sustained a severe defeat, and was obliged to return to Antioch, and give up the possession of Cœlesyria. All the cities and communities that had been under his rule outbid one another in flattery and in submission to the conqueror, Philopator. Joseph remained in his position of trust, and continued to be the favourite of the Egyptian king. Through him, and through his connection with the Court life of Philopator, a complete change had taken place in the Judæan nation, which was less visible in the provinces, but most striking in the capital.

By means of the immense riches that Joseph had accumulated, a real shower of gold had fallen upon the country; "he had raised the people out of poverty and needy circumstances into ease and comfort." In order to collect the taxes of so many different towns, he was obliged to have responsible agents, and he preferred choosing them from amongst his own people. These agents enriched themselves in their own way, and bore themselves proudly. Joseph and his immediate belongings were elated by the consideration he enjoyed at the Egyptian Court, owing to his quickly-gained wealth, and the troop of soldiers always at his command, by whose help he held in check the people of various nationalities in Palestine, the remnant of the Philistines, the Phœnicians, Idumæans, and even the Greek-Macedonian colonists. The horizon of the Judæans, particularly of those who lived in Jerusalem, widened as they came into contact with the Greeks. Their taste became more refined, their dwellings more beautiful, and they began to introduce the art of painting. The Judæans who lived in Alexandria, who had been for a century under Greek influence, and had, to a certain extent, become hellenized, now brought their influence to bear upon their fellow-countrymen, but the simplicity of the Judæan habits and customs suffered in consequence.

A shower of gold does not always have a fruitful, but sometimes a desolating or deteriorating effect; and so it was in this case. The rich upstarts lost all balance; they not only gave importance to the possession of riches, and preferred money-making to any other occupation, but they became blind admirers of the Greeks. They soon acquired their extravagant habits and frivolous customs, to the deterioration of their own national virtues. The Greeks loved society beyond anything. They indulged in the most unruly merry-

making at their repasts, which they took at a common table. The Judæans imported the custom of the public meal, but reclined on couches whilst they ate and drank, and introduced wine, music, and song at their entertainments. All this was innocent enough; but unfortunately it led to more than merely making life brighter. Greek frivolity and extravagance drew their imitators rapidly into a vortex of dissipation.

Joseph was constantly at the court of Ptolemy Philopator, when business took him to Alexandria. This court was a sink of depravity. The days were spent in revelry, and the nights in shameless debauchery; the prevailing depravity led astray both the people and the army.

Philopator entertained the absurd belief that his ancestors were descended from the God of Wine, Dionysus (Bacchus); and he considered himself obliged to introduce bacchanalian revelries into his kingdom. Anyone wishing to ingratiate himself with the king and his boon companions was forced to belong to the fraternity of Dionysus. Whenever Joseph was called to Alexandria he enjoyed the doubtful honour of being invited to the king's orgies, and of being received by the followers of the God of Wine. It was at such a feast that he actually contracted a violent passion for one of those dissolute dancing-women, who never failed to be present upon these occasions.

Jerusalem did not long remain untainted by those social impurities. Joseph, out of friendship, let us suppose, to his royal patron, introduced Dionysian festivals into Judæa. At the turning-point of the year, when winter is receding before spring, when the vine is shooting into blossom, and the wine is fermenting for the second time in the barrels, then the Greeks held their great festival to Dionysus: "the festival of the barrel-openings." Two days were devoted to intoxicating orgies, when friends

interchanged pitchers of wine as presents. He who drank most was most honoured. This festival of the "barrel-opening" was now to be celebrated in much the same way in Judæa. But, in order to dress this foreign custom in a Judæan garb, the rich made it an occasion for dispensing alms to the poor. Extravagance is always the companion of wild revelry. The rich Judæans soon copied the Greek custom, and, callous to shame and honour, they introduced singers, dancers, and dissolute women at these festivals. A poetical writer raises a warning voice against the growing unchastity of the age:—

"Meet not with an harlot, lest thou fall into her snares. Use not much the company of a woman that is a singer, lest thou be taken with her attempts. . . . . Give not thy soul unto harlots, that thou lose not thine inheritance." (Ecclus. ix. 3, seq.)

The love of art and beauty which Joseph introduced into Judæa did not compensate for this loss of chastity and morality. Even earnest men, under Greek influence, began to cast doubts upon their old traditional belief. They questioned whether the teachings of Judaism were binding and true throughout, whether the Deity really demanded from man the denial of all self-gratification, and whether God really cared for the great world of humanity.

The teachings of Epicurus, in which the shadow-like gods recommended self-indulgence to man, were well received by the deteriorated Greek-Macedonians, and particularly by the most distinguished Alexandrians. It was from that city that the poison spread to Judæa. Some Judæans of Jerusalem indulged in metaphysical speculations, and began to look down upon the teachings of Judaism. These speculations might have taken some pronounced shape, had discord not broken out amongst the upstarts. Feelings of jealousy had sprung up between the seven sons of Joseph

by his first marriage, and the youngest, Hyrcanus, the son of his second wife. He was distinguished in youth by his quick intellect, his ability, and his craft, characteristics that endeared him to his father. In the year 210, a son was born to the king Philopator. The different satraps of the cities of Cœlesyria were anxious to express by presents and congratulations their feelings of affection to the Egyptian king. Joseph felt that he ought not to absent himself upon such an occasion. But his growing infirmities not allowing him to undertake such a journey, he asked one of his sons to represent him. Hyrcanus was the only one who felt equal to such a task, and his brothers unanimously requested their father to accept his services. At the same time they did not scruple to throw out dark hints to their friends in Alexandria that they would not regret it if their brother were swept from their path. But Joseph's young son knew how to curry favour at Court. His extravagant gifts upon the great day of public congratulation—one hundred beautiful slaves to the king, and one hundred beautiful female slaves to the queen—threw the gifts of all others into the shade. His ready wit and adroit tongue soon made him a favoured guest at Philopator's table. His visit drawing to a close, he returned to Jerusalem, full of gratified vanity. But his perfidious brothers were lying in wait for him on the road, and determined to accomplish what the Alexandrians had failed to do. If Hyrcanus was not forewarned, he was at least forearmed. He succeeded in preserving his own life, but in doing so he killed two of his brothers. His father received him sternly enough, not on account of the unfortunate fate of his elder sons, but partly on account of his extravagance in Egypt, and partly out of jealousy at his extraordinary popularity. No wonder that Hyrcanus should not have remained

in Jerusalem, but that he returned to Alexandria.

Up to this time, discord had not troubled the nation at large, or the people of Jerusalem, but had confined itself to the family of Joseph. No one could have imagined that the growing enmity of the members of that house, and its Greek proclivities, would end by bringing misery upon the whole nation. The present seemed bright and sunny; prosperity had established a sure footing in the country, and offered the means for beautifying life. The neighbouring people acknowledged the political leader or satrap among the Judæans, and none ventured to attack the nation, nor to treat it with contempt. Judæa had not known so peaceful a state of things since the age of Nehemiah.

It was, therefore, not unnatural that a poem should have appeared at that time, shedding a rosy flush over the age, and anticipating happy and joyous days, in the form of a love song.

A cloudless sky, green meadows, fragrant flowers, and, above all things, careless lightheartedness, play a great part in it. One would think that there were no more serious occupation in life than to wander over hills of myrrh, to repose among lilies, to whisper words of love, and to revel in the ecstasy of the moment. In this calm age, preceding a storm, the "Song of Songs," (Schir-ha-shirim), was written. It was the offspring of careless, happy days. In it the Hebrew language proved its capability of expressing tenderness and depth of sentiment, of clothing thought in delicate strophe and antistrophe, and of painting the beauties of nature in poetic words. The author of this poem had been living in a Greek world, had refreshed himself with the charm of its diction, and had tried to reproduce some of its fine touches. But beneath the veil of poetry he endeavoured to point reprovingly to the evils of the time.

He created an ideal being—the beautiful shepherdess, Sulamit, the daughter of Aminadab, in contradistinction to the unchaste and impure love of the Greek world. Sulamit loves her shepherd fervently and devotedly. But she is chaste and modest throughout, and is incapable of an impure thought or action. Her beauty is enhanced by her grace of movement, by her soft voice and gentle speech. As her eyes are like the dove's, so is her heart full of dove-like innocence. In somewhat florid language, but in the most exquisite poetry, the author of the Song of Songs, after singing the praises of Sulamit, denounces the superficial, sensual love that can be bought for money. He raises his voice against the unchastity of public dancers and singers, against enervating town life, and unmanly feasting.

Joseph, the grandson of Simon the Just, died in the year 208, leaving his family torn by dissension. His office of satrap naturally devolved upon one of his sons; but Hyrcanus, the youngest, being the only one known and liked at the Egyptian Court, the preference was no doubt given to him. This fired the hatred of his brothers. They assumed a hostile position towards him upon his arrival in Jerusalem, and as Hyrcanus had a large number of followers, civil war seemed imminent. The high priest, Simon II., decided between the merits of the two parties. He sided with the elder brothers, and Hyrcanus was again compelled to retreat to Alexandria. There he intended pleading his cause, but he could obtain no hearing at the Egyptian court. For his patron Philopator, had just expired (206), and Egypt in her turn became a prey to disorder.

Two ambitious kings, tempted by the weakness of the house of Ptolemy, seized upon Egypt and her provinces, and divided them. These were Antiochus the Great, of Syria, and Philip of Macedon.

Joseph's eldest sons, or, as they were generally called, the Tobiades, out of hatred to their younger brother, Hyrcanus, determined to side with Antiochus against Egypt. They became the Seleucidæan party. They are described as traitors who were entirely absorbed by their feelings of envy and hatred, to the detriment of all patriotism. They opened the gates of Jerusalem to the Syrian king, and did homage to him. Consequently the party of the Ptolemies or of Hyrcanus was entirely crushed.

Thus Judæa came under the rule of the Seleucidæan kings (203–202). But an Ætolian commander of hired troops, Scopas, undertook to oppose the Syrian conqueror. He soon overran the Jordanic and trans-Jordanic territories, causing terror amongst the Tobiades and their followers. Desperately they struggled against their impending doom, for the Ætolian Scopas gave no mercy. He took Jerusalem by storm, laid waste the city and the Temple, and killed many of those whom he looked upon as enemies. Numbers sought safety in flight.

In order to secure the allegiance of the conquered people, Scopas left a contingent in the fortress of Baris or Acra. But the re-conquest of Judæa and Cœlesyria for the son of Ptolemy, the child Epiphanes, was not to be lasting. The Syrians now re-appeared on the scene. In the beautiful valley of Mount Hermon, near the mountain city of Panion, at the source of the Jordan, a wild and terrible battle was fought, in which Scopas and his troops were entirely routed. Judæa once again became a prey to civil wars; she resembled a storm-tossed ship, flung violently from side to side, on which both parties inflicted the most deadly blows.

Antiochus succeeded in re-conquering the greater part of the land, and then marched upon Jerusalem.

The people, headed by the Synhedrim and the priests, came out to meet him, bringing provisions for his troops and elephants. But the Ætolian contingent still held the fortress of Acra. Antiochus or one of his commanders, with the help of the Judæans, undertook the siege of the fortress. The Seleucidæan king greatly valued the friendship of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and gave orders to restore their city and rebuild their Temple. They were treated with much consideration, and were allowed to govern according to their own laws. The Judæans alone had the right of entering the Temple; no one else was permitted to do so, no impurities were suffered to pollute it, and no unclean animals were to be bred in Jerusalem.

Antiochus remained in occupation of Cœlesyria, and therefore also of Judæa. But he kept a watchful eye upon Egypt and her neighbouring provinces, of whose conquest, under the rule of a boy-king, he felt assured. The Romans, free for action since the downfall of Carthage, formed a stumbling-block to his progress. Antiochus had secretly devised a plan of giving battle to the Romans, and of attempting the conquest of Asia Minor, Greece, and Egypt. But his indiscretion and lack of real genius led to his humiliation. He was defeated by the Romans (190), and was so completely crushed that he was obliged to give up part of his conquests in Greece and Asia Minor, besides the whole of his fleet. He had also to pay 15,000 talents annually, during twelve years, to the conqueror. He was constrained to send his son, Antiochus Epiphanes, who was destined to leave a bloody mark upon the annals of Judæan history, to Rome, as a hostage. Severe was the penalty that Antiochus paid for having over-estimated the strength of the Seleucidæans. In order to be able to pay the heavy indemnity, the Syrian kings robbed temples; this sacrilege made them odious, and

fanned the hatred of the most patient amongst the people. Antiochus, surnamed the Great, met his death through one of these acts of rapine (187).

His son was equally sacrilegious, and by his evil conduct and the returning strength and greatness of the Judæan nation, he helped to bring about the decadence and the fall of his own Seleucidæan kingdom.

The deterioration of the Judæan community, which began under Joseph's satrapy, increased rapidly during the constant struggle between the Seleucidæans and the Ptolemies for the possession of Cœlesyria. The leaders of the two parties were not particular as to the means they employed to forward their own cause, or to injure that of their antagonists. The friends of the Seleucidæans were above all things determined to find allies amongst the neighbouring tribes. The Greeks, however, who colonised parts of Palestine, hated the Judæans, on account of all the humiliations they had suffered at the hands of the satrap Joseph. There were other antagonistic races besides; the old enemies of the Judæans still existed in Judæa, recalling the warlike days of the Judges, and of David's reign. For the Idumæans and the Philistines were in possession of Judæan territory and occupied the ancient city of Hebron. Both Idumæans and Philistines hated the Judæans, and made them feel this hatred upon every occasion, whilst in the north the Samaritans presented a warlike front.

The Judæans fondly believed that they could put faith in the Greek colonists, and that the Greek-Macedonian rulers, commanders and officers, would enable them to guard against the hostile advances of their numerous foes or invaders. But in order to curry favour with the Greeks, it was necessary to endeavour to become like them in manners, customs and observances. Many Judæans of Jeru-

salem, Hellenised to all outward appearance, determined upon educating the Judæan youth according to the Greek model. Thus they established races and contests in wrestling. The most distinguished and richest among the Judæans belonged to this Greek faction, amongst others, Jesus (Joshua), the son of the high priest, who called himself Jason, and who was followed by many Aaronites. The party was led by the Tobiades, or sons and grandsons of Joseph the satrap. But the Law of the Judæans, the Torah, was sternly opposed to all innovations; it looked with horror upon the Greek fashion of appearing naked for the race, and had it been obediently followed it must have put an end to all Hellenization. The Greek party, however, determined to defy the Law and the ancient customs of their forefathers.

Complete incorporation with the pagan Greeks was their aim Of what use was the fence erected by Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Synhedrin round Judaism? The Hellenists pulled it down, and tried to annihilate the very individuality of the Judæan people.

If a nation is not quite demoralized, the excess of one party calls forth a corresponding excess on the opposing side. This is no uncommon case in history. Those Judæans who were looking with pain and horror upon the conduct of their co-religionists, grouped themselves into a strong party, clinging desperately to the Law and the customs of their fathers, and cherishing them as the apple of their eye. They were "the community of the pious," or Chassidim, a development of the Nazirites. Every religious custom was to them of inviolable sanctity. A more complete contrast than was presented by these two parties could hardly be imagined. They understood one another as little as if they had not been sons of the same tribe, people of the same nation. That which

was the dearest wish of the Hellenists the Chassidim condemned as a fearful sin; they called its authors, "breakers of the Law," "trespassers of the Covenant." Again, what was dear and sacred to the Chassidim, the Hellenists looked upon as folly, and denounced as a hindrance to the welfare and stability of the community. Amongst the Chassidim there were two noted teachers of the Law: Josê, the son of Joëzer, of the town of Zereda, and Josê, the son of Jochanan of Jerusalem. They both founded schools. The one laid more value upon the theoretical study of the Law, the other upon the practical results of its teaching. Josê of Zereda taught his disciples: "Let your house be a place of assembly for the wise men; let yourselves be covered with the dust off their feet; drink in their words with thirst." Josê of Jerusalem taught on the other hand, "Let the door of your house be opened wide; let the poor be your guests, and do not converse with women."

Between the two widely opposed parties of the Hellenists and the Assidæans, the people at large remained neutral. They certainly took delight in the luxuries and refinements of life introduced by the Greeks, and they did not care to have their pleasures narrowed by the severe Chassidim; at the same time they disapproved of the laxity of the Hellenists, they disliked breaking with the history of their past, obliterating it by an entire revolution. But the passionate warfare that existed between Hellenists and Chassidim, menacing with extinction one of the two parties, obliged those who were neutral to declare their colours.

The Chassidim, or patriots, were still supreme in their position of command in the community. At their head was Onias III., high priest, son of Simon II. He is described as being a remarkable man, of gentle character. But he was at the same time so great an enemy to wrongdoing,

so fervent a partisan of religious teaching, so determined a defender of the Law, that he was one of the most vehement opposers of all Hellenistic practices, and the Hellenists accordingly hated him fiercely. His principal enemies, besides the Tobiades, were three brothers, of a distinguished Benjamite family, who resembled one another in audacity—Simon, Onias called Menelaus, and Lysimachus. They hated the high priest not only on account of his constant opposition to their innovations, but also on account of his alliance with Hyrcanus, who was still suffering from the persecutions of his brothers and their followers.

Hyrcanus was in great favour at the Egyptian court, and Ptolemy V. had given him a satrapy over a trans-Jordanic territory. Armed troops were probably at his disposal to help him in the discharge of his duties. The Judæans who colonised the province, may possibly have become his allies. By their aid he was able to levy contributions upon the Arabs, or Nabatæans, of the provinces of Hesbon and Medaba, as ruthlessly as his father Joseph had once done in Cœlesyria. In this way he accumulated vast wealth. He erected a wonderful citadel of white marble, upon a rock near Hesbon, to all intents and purposes a fortress, but of surpassing beauty. He called this magnificent palace Tyrus; he surrounded it with a wide moat of great depth, and constructed the gates of the outer wall of such narrow dimensions that they could only admit one person at a time. Hyrcanus spent several years in this mountain retreat, probably from 181 to 175. The surplus of the wealth accumulated by Hyrcanus was sent from time to time to the Temple in Jerusalem, so as to secure it from the rapacity of the heathen tribes.

Simon, the Benjamite, held some kind of office in the Temple, where he strenuously opposed the high priest. Onias had only one course left open

to him; he banished Simon from Jerusalem, and then, in order to stem the ever-growing anarchy in the city, he passed a similar sentence of exile upon the Tobiades. But by doing this he only added fresh fuel to the flames. Simon devised a diabolical scheme for wreaking vengeance upon his enemy. He repaired to the military commander of Cœlesyria and Phœnicia, Apollonius, son of Thraseius, and informed him that great treasures were hidden in the Temple of Jerusalem, not belonging to the Sanctuary, and consequently royal property. Apollonius lost no time in giving the king, Seleucus II. (187-175), information on this subject. Seleucus thereupon sent his treasurer Heliodorus to Jerusalem with orders to confiscate as royal property the treasures concealed in the Temple. Onias naturally resisted this unjust demand. Heliodorus then showed his royal warrant, and prepared to force his way into the sanctuary. Great was the consternation in Jerusalem at the thought of a heathen entering the Temple and robbing it of its treasures. However, by some means or other, this sacrilege did not take place. We are not told what means were employed, but tradition, full of pious love for the Temple of God, has given a miraculous colour to the whole proceeding.

But Simon could not rest in his attempts to bring about the downfall of the hated high priest. He even had recourse to the aid of hired assassins. Fortunately, he was unsuccessful; but Onias was now thoroughly alarmed. He determined to lay the real state of affairs before the king Seleucus, with an account of the conflicting parties and of the motives that induced Simon and the Tobiades to conspire against him, imploring the king's protection and aid. He appointed his brother Joshua, or Jason, as his delegate, and repaired to Antioch. During his absence the Hellenists continued their aggressive conduct, eager to obtain the office of

high priest for one of their own party. A high priest on their side would not only be master of the treasures in the Temple, but leader of the nation. He could insist upon the introduction of Greek customs, and his spiritual office would give him a show of right. The Hellenists were so demoralised that they held nothing sacred.

These secret devices soon became known, and roused the indignation of many who clung to their old customs and traditionary teaching. Amongst these was a poet and writer of proverbs, Jesus Sirach by name, the son of Eleazer (200-176). He was prompted by the wrong-doing he witnessed in Jerusalem to write a book of pithy sayings, applicable to the evils of the age, and which might prove salutary to its Judæan readers. He was one of the last authors of poetical proverbs. He was familiar with the Law, the prophets, and other instructive and spiritual works, and he was a close reader of the older Book of Proverbs, imitating the style of that work, though without arriving at its graceful simplicity.

Sirach did not belong to the sterner Chassidim who refrained from all harmless pleasures, and who denounced others for enjoying them. On the contrary, he was in favour of the social meal, enlivened by music and wine. To the disturbers of innocent merriment, whose dismal talk put an end to all gaiety, he addressed the following delicate, ironical rebuke:—

"Speak, thou that art the elder, for it becometh thee, but with sound judgment, and shew not forth wisdom out of time. As a signet of an emerald set in a work of gold, so is the melody of music with pleasant wine." (Ecclus. xxxii. 3, 4, 6.)

There were some over-pious Judæans who condemned the use of all medical skill and aid; they insisted that as all maladies were sent from God, He alone could cure them. Sirach, therefore, explained in his proverbs that, as the skill of the

physician was undoubtedly a gift of God, it was not impious to call in the physician's aid in healing the sick.

But all his power was brought into play in his attack upon the social and religious deterioration of his brethren, and in his painful avowal of their humiliation in the sight of the neighbouring peoples. Their social depravity occupied him more than their political oppression. Sirach stung the wealthy and the distinguished of the Hellenist party with barbed words. They were worshippers of Mammon; they indulged in immodest practices; they chose the companionship of dancers, singers, and painted women, and he drew in no flattering colours the portraits of the daughters of Jerusalem.

Sirach declared that the root of all this evil was the indifference of the Judæans to their sacred Law. His aim was to reinstate it in the hearts of the people. He touched upon another subject, a burning question of the day. Many in Jerusalem, particularly the most distinguished and the wealthiest, were anxious to substitute for the high priest Onias one of their own party, who might not be a descendant of Aaron. Was it necessary to restrict the priestly office to one family? This question was being constantly mooted. Sirach's proverbs are directed against the possibility of a revolution in the sacred order.

By an enumeration of examples, taken from the history of the Judæan people, he endeavoured to show that obedience to the Law and to established rule entail happy consequences, but that disobedience must lead to fatal results. He gave a short account of illustrious and notorious personages, dwelling upon their virtuous deeds or nefarious practices, as the case might be. He described the rising of the family of Korah against Aaron, their final destruction by fire, and the intensified glory of the high priest. This was a hint

to his co-religionists that the zealous Hellenists should not provoke a repetition of Korah's punishment. He also dwelt upon the history of Phineas, Aaron's grandson, the third in glory, who was permitted to make reconciliation for Israel.

He passed rapidly over the division of the two kingdoms and the depravity of the people, lingering upon the activity and energy of the prophets. He mentioned with loving recollection the names of Zerubbabel, the high priest Joshua, and Nehemiah, in the days succeeding the Captivity. And at length he closed with a brilliant description of the high priest, Simon the Just, of his good deeds and the majesty of his priesthood. He was the ancestor of the family of the high priest and of the Tobiades, and his example was to be one of instruction and of warning. But unfortunately the reign of anarchy was not over; dissensions were growing, and the Hellenists were bringing the Judæan nation to the brink of destruction.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE TYRANNICAL CONVERSION TO HELLENISM AND THE ELEVATION OF THE MACCABEES.

Antiochus Epiphanes—His Character—His Wars with Rome—He appoints Jason to the High Priesthood—Introduction of the Greek Games—Jason sends Envoys to Tyre to take part in the Olympian Games—Affairs in Jerusalem—Antiochus invades Egypt—Report of his Death in Jerusalem—Antiochus attacks the City and defiles the Temple—His Designs against Judaism—His Second Invasion of Egypt—The Persecution of the Judæans—The Martyrs—Mattathias and his five Sons—Apelles appears in Modin—The Chassidim—Death of Mattathias and Appointment of Judas Maccabæus as Leader—His Virtues—Battles against Apollonius and Heron—Antiochus determines to Exterminate the Judæan People—Composition and Object of the Book of Daniel—Victory of Judas over Lysias.

175—166 B.C.

THERE now appeared on the scene a royal personage who seemed destined to increase the irrepressible disorders in Judæa, and to bring greater misery upon the House of Israel than it had ever known before. This man was Antiochus Epiphanes, whom history has justly branded. He belonged to a class of men who have a double nature. He was a mixture of malice and of noble sentiments; he was cunning and calculating, yet capricious, petty in great enterprises, and great in trivialities, so that even his contemporaries could not fathom his character, nor understand whether weakness of intellect or dissimulation prompted him to commit the absurdities by which he made himself ridiculous in the eyes of the people. Apparently coveting the name of "Epimanes," or the *Madman*, his early training encouraged him to lead an irregular life.

He resided for thirteen years at Rome, whither his father had sent him as a hostage for the maintenance of peace and for ensuring the payment of the costs of the war. Rome had just become the capital of the world. The Romans had conquered the Carthaginians, the Macedonians and the Syrians, and the Eternal City was in a state of transition, passing from the austere morals of the Catos to the wantonness of the Claudii. Debauchery and an unnatural desire for pleasure—the immorality of the Greeks—speedily took root there. But what Antiochus learnt principally at Rome, was a contempt of men and their cherished customs; there also he acquired not only insolence, but a hardness of heart which ignores all compassion, and malice, which not only prompts the sacrifice, but the torture of its object.

Antiochus succeeded in obtaining permission to leave Rome, and to send there his nephew Demetrius, son of the king Seleucus Philopator, as hostage in his place. He then returned to Syria, probably with the intention of dethroning his brother, but was frustrated in his design by Heliodorus, one of the court magnates, who had murdered Seleucus (175), and taken possession of the kingdom. It may be questioned, whether Antiochus was not implicated in this deed; he was at that time tarrying by the way on his return to Athens. Eumenes, king of Pergamum, his father's enemy, and Attalus (the brother of the latter) put the murderer Heliodorus to flight, and proclaimed Antiochus king of Syria and Asia. Thus Antiochus inaugurated his reign by craft and usurpation; for Demetrius, now a hostage at Rome, was the rightful sovereign. The Romans favoured the usurper, for they hoped, by increasing the dissensions amongst the royal family, to bring about the fall of those kingdoms which still resisted their power. Antiochus, however, was desirous of foiling this stratagem of the Romans. A Judæan prophet

thus graphically describes his accession to the throne:—

"And in his place shall stand up a contemptible person to whom they had not given the honour of the kingdom; but he shall come suddenly, and shall obtain the kingdom by flatteries. . . . And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully; for he shall come up and shall become strong, with a small people. Suddenly shall he come even upon the fattest places of the province; and he shall do what his fathers have not done, nor his fathers' fathers; he shall scatter among them prey, and spoil, and substance." (Daniel xi. 21–24.)

He also introduced into Antioch the Roman gladiators: these were prisoners of war or slaves, who were made to fight each other with arms until one succumbed or was killed. Antiochus had entirely banished from his soul the fear of God; he neither reverenced the gods of his ancestors, nor any other god, for in his overbearing pride he considered himself omnipotent. The Judæans were now in the hands of this monster, who had a heart of stone, and scorned alike man and law, morality and religion. If peace had reigned in Judæa, the country might have escaped his notice, but the discord which the Hellenists had excited there directed his attention towards the Judæan people and their land. The Greeks themselves requested his interference in the internal affairs of Judæa, directing his notice to Hyrcanus, who, residing in his castle near Hesbon, collected the taxes from the Arabian and Moabite inhabitants of the land in the name of the king of Egypt; the Hellenist party, moreover, hated him as their enemy. Hyrcanus, who dreaded an ignominious death, committed suicide, and Antiochus seized all his property.

The Hellenists then carried out their long-cherished plan of divesting their other enemy, the high priest Onias, of his dignity. The brother of the latter, called Jesus or Jason, promised Antiochus a large sum, if he would transfer the dignity of high priest to him; and the king was so greatly in want

of money that he had no scruples in granting the request. He was, however, denounced as a partisan of the Ptolemies, and the accuser thus became the accused. The Hellenists, or rather the high priest, next petitioned Antiochus, that those Judæans who were trained for the Greek combats should enjoy the rights of citizenship in Antiochia and Macedonia, and be admitted to all public meetings and games. These games were always turned into sober earnest by the Greeks, for they considered them the aim and end of life. The Greeks who had settled in Palestine and Phœnicia strengthened the national tie of their common descent by introducing the Olympian games, every four years, into the land of the Barbarians, and the latter, who were allowed to take part in these games, felt themselves greatly honoured by associating with the Greek nobility.

Jason and the Hellenists wished to obtain the right of citizenship for the Judæans, and at the same time they introduced gymnasia into Jerusalem, hoping by this means to diminish the hatred and contempt which they excited. As soon as Antiochus had conceded this right to them, Jason took great interest in organising the exercises which were to be practised before the Judæans could take part in the Olympian games. The high priest selected (174) a site for the games in the Birah or Acra (Acropolis) north-west of the Temple. It comprised a gymnasium for youth and an ephebeion for boys. Greek masters were most probably hired for teaching the Judæan men and youths their games, which consisted in racing, jumping, wrestling, in throwing discs and in boxing. It soon became evident, however, that these games, which owed their origin to quite a different mode of life, were incompatible with Judaism. According to Greek custom, the men who took part in these contests were naked, the Judæan youths who consented to compete were

therefore compelled to overcome their feeling of shame, and appear naked before the assembled people, when by uncovering their bodies they were immediately recognised as Judæans. Were they then to take part in the Olympian games, and to expose themselves to the mockery of the jeering Greeks? But even this difficulty they evaded by undergoing a painful operation, so as to disguise the fact that they were Judæans. Youths soon crowded to the gymnasium, and the young priests neglected their duties at the Temple to take part in the exercises of the palæstra and the stadium. The pious saw with anxiety this adoption of foreign customs, but they held their peace. Meanwhile even Jason's confederates were dissatisfied with his leaning to Greek manners, as it soon led to the denial of the fundamental truths of Judaism. When the Olympian games were celebrated at Tyre (June, 172), sacrifices were offered up to the Greek god Hercules, the nominal founder of these combats. Jason then sent ambassadors to Tyre, who were accustomed to these games, and entitled to take part in them, and, according to custom, they were entrusted with a subsidy (300 drachms, 3,300?) destined for sacrifices to be offered to Hercules. But the ambassadors, although Greek at heart, felt conscience-stricken at the manner in which this sum was to be employed; it seemed to stamp them as idolaters, and to prove their belief in the divinity of a marble statue. They therefore accepted the commission on condition that they should be at liberty to devote the money they took with them to any other purpose, for the conception of God was still deeply rooted among the Judæans, and even in the hearts of those men who were partial to the Greek customs and attached to the Hellenist party. Jason's ambassadors gave the money they had brought as a contribution to the fleet which Antiochus was fitting out at Tyre.

Meanwhile the dissensions in Jerusalem increased to such a pitch that pernicious consequences could not fail to follow. The Hellenists were devising intrigues to overthrow Jason, and to have the office of high priest placed under their own control. They were impelled to this either by feelings of ambition, or by the fear that the brother of Onias was too much in favour of Judaism, and not sufficiently energetic, to overthrow the patriarchal customs. Onias Menelaus, a brother of Simon, one of themselves, an unscrupulous man, who denounced Onias and the treasures in the Temple, was to be made high priest. Jason sent the annual contributions to the king through Menelaus, who promised to raise 300 talents more for Antiochus, if he were made high priest. He boasted of his great credit, which would enable him to further the king's cause more energetically than Jason. Antiochus did not scruple to transfer the dignity of the high priest to the highest bidder (172-171). He immediately sent Sostrates, one of his officers, with a troop of Cyprian soldiers, to Jerusalem, to subdue any opposition that might be made, and to watch over the punctual delivery of the promised sums. Sostrates placed the soldiers in the fortified Acra, to keep down the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and proclaimed the dismissal of Jason according to the king's order. The latter was either banished or he escaped from Jerusalem, whence he crossed over the Jordan into the land of the Ammonites. This district was governed by a Nabatæan prince, named Aretas, by whom he was most cordially received. This change only increased the disorders in Jerusalem; the greater part of the people were indignant that Menelaus, who was a Benjamite, and not of the family of the high priests, and who besides, was known to be opposed to the patriarchal customs, should have been invested with that holy dignity. Even the admirers of Greek character

and the lovers of novelty condemned the selection of Menelaus.

Both the followers of Jason and those who did not wish to break entirely with Judaism disapproved of his dismissal. But the malcontents were compelled to be silent because they feared the presence of the Syrian officer and the Cyprian troops, which he commanded; but great excitement prevailed in the minds of the people, which threatened to break forth at the earliest opportunity. Menelaus brought matters to a climax. He had promised the king more than he could give in payment for the dignity he had received. Antiochus was indignant, and summoned him to come and justify himself. He was therefore compelled to go to Antioch, and he left his brother Lysimachus, who was as little conscientious as himself, to replace him; he then took holy gifts out of the Temple, intending to sell them, in order to make up the required sum. The worthy high priest, Onias III., who resided at Antioch heard of this crime; he also learnt that Menelaus had sold utensils from the Temple, in Tyre and other Phœnician towns. Indignant at such behaviour, he accused Menelaus of robbing the Temple, a crime which was considered heinous even amongst the Greeks. This accusation hastened the death of the high priest. For Menelaus came to an agreement with Andronicus, the king's representative, to remove Onias before the king should be cognisant of the theft committed in the Temple, and of the cause for which it had been perpetrated. Andronicus, being party to the theft himself, was anxious to make Onias powerless, and therefore enticed him from his hiding-place in the temple of Apollo at Daphne, near Antioch, where he had taken refuge, and basely killed him on the spot (171). This was one more crime added to those of which Menelaus had already been guilty. The murder of the high

priest produced a great sensation, even among the Greeks in Syria, and Antiochus was compelled to punish the murderer Andronicus.

Meanwhile Menelaus, although his accuser was dead, was forced to try to conciliate the king. In order to do this he made his brother Lysimachus steal some more of the treasures of the Temple. These thefts, however, did not remain unnoticed; as soon as they were discovered and the perpetrator found out, there arose a feeling of great bitterness against him. When the shameful conduct of the two brothers became known to the people outside Jerusalem, they hurried into the city, and joining the inhabitants of the capital, they threatened the violator of the Temple with death. Lysimachus armed his followers and placed a commander at their head named Avran, an old comrade and fellow-sinner. The unarmed people were not frightened by the soldiers, but stormed them with stones and sticks, blinded them with heaps of ashes, killed a great many, and put others to flight. Lysimachus himself was slain in the vicinity of the treasury of the Temple. Menelaus naturally brought an accusation against the rebels of Jerusalem before the king, and the latter organised a judicial court in Tyre to discuss the accusation and the defence. Three members of the council, whom the people had selected for the purpose, proved in so convincing a manner the guilt of Lysimachus and his brother regarding the desecration of the Temple, that the verdict would have turned out unfavourably for them. But the inventive genius of Menelaus managed to secure the interest of a creature similar to himself, and he succeeded in turning the balance in favour of the culprit. Antiochus proclaimed from his seat of justice, that the criminal Menelaus was free, whilst he condemned to death the three deputies from Jerusalem, who had so clearly proved his guilt. The Tyrian witnesses of this breach of

justice, evinced their displeasure by taking a sympathetic part in the funeral of the three noble men, but Menelaus and injustice triumphed. He retained his coveted power, and he formed plans to revenge himself upon the people, who hated him so fiercely. He calumniated his enemies, that is to say, the whole nation, to the king. On the one hand, he maintained that his enemies were partisans of the Egyptian Court, and that they only persecuted him because he opposed their party intrigues; on the other, Menelaus calumniated all Judaism; he said that the Law of Moses was replete with the hatred of humanity, for it forbade them to take part in the repasts of other nations, or to show any kindness to strangers. As Antiochus was then concentrating all his thoughts on the conquest of Egypt, he believed Menelaus' calumnies, and regarded the Judæans with distrust. He could not be indifferent to the fact, that whilst he undertook a dangerous expedition against Egypt, he left a formidable enemy in his rear.

At last he commenced his long-cherished plan of attacking Egypt. An excuse for war is easily found, and Antiochus soon discovered one. His sister Cleopatra, married to Ptolemy V., had died and left two infant sons, Philometor and Physcon, the former of whom was considered as king, but whose two guardians Eulæus and Lenæus reigned in his stead. Antiochus resolved to anticipate the war which would shortly be directed against himself, and assembled his troops to make a descent into Egypt. He delayed his attack, however, for some time out of fear of the Romans. But as the latter became more and more deeply implicated in a new war with Perseus, king of Macedonia, he ventured at last to cross the Egyptian frontier (170). Antiochus defeated the Egyptian army near Pelusium, and penetrated deeper into the country.

The two guardians fled with the young king

Philometor. Thereupon Antiochus took possession of the whole of northern Egypt, and advanced to Alexandria, to besiege it. The inhabitants, meanwhile proclaimed the younger brother Ptolemy Physcon king, and defended the town so valiantly that the Syrian king despaired of conquering them. He therefore entered into negotiations with the elder brother, sent for him, signed a treaty with him, and pretended to continue the war for his benefit. The two kings were deceiving each other, whilst they sat together at the same table. In Judæa the consequences of the war were watched with eager suspense. If the Egyptians were victorious, the probability was, that the sad misfortunes brought about by the hated high priest would come to an end. The Egyptian Court favoured the national Judæan party, and received all the patriots who fled from the tyranny of Antiochus and Menelaus. The report was suddenly spread that Antiochus had fallen, and the intelligence produced great excitement. The deposed high-priest Jason left the Ammonites, where he had found refuge, and hurried to Jerusalem, accompanied by an army, with which he hoped to take possession of the town. Menelaus barricaded the gates of Jerusalem, and fought the enemy from the walls. A real civil war thus broke out, caused only by the ambition of two men, who wanted to obtain the high-priesthood as a road to power. But as only a small number of the inhabitants sided with Menelaus, Jason succeeded in entering Jerusalem with his troops. Menelaus had to hide behind the walls of the Acra.

Meanwhile Antiochus left Egypt with rich spoils (169) perhaps for the purpose of raising new troops. Having heard of the occurrences in Jerusalem, his anger was roused against the Judæans, and the Covenant of Judaism; his wicked, inhuman nature broke forth against the people. He suddenly attacked Jerusalem and

massacred the inhabitants, sparing neither age, youth, nor sex, and making no difference between friend and foe. He forced his way into the Temple, and as a mark of contempt for the God who was worshipped there, desecrated by his presence the Holy of Holies, removing the golden altar, candelabra and table, in fact all the treasures, which still remained. Menelaus guided him in this act of spoliation; he impudently blasphemed the God of Israel, whose omnipotence was sung by his followers, but whom he scorned, because He did not interfere with these sacrilegious actions. He spread a false report to palliate his guilt in the massacre of innocent people and the desecration of the Temple, and thus for a time helped to bring Judaism into bad repute amongst all civilised nations. Antiochus declared that he had seen the statue of a man with a long beard in the Holy of Holies, and that this statue stood on an ass and held a book in its hand. He thought it must be the statue of the lawgiver Moses, who had given the Judæans inhuman, horrible laws to separate them from all other peoples. A rumour thereupon spread amongst the Greeks and Romans that Antiochus had found the head of an ass made of gold in the Temple which the Judæans venerated, and consequently that they worshipped asses. Antiochus probably spread another horrible lie to blacken the Judæans: he said he had also discovered a Greek lying in bed in the Temple, who entreated to be released. The Judæans were said to kill a Greek every year, and to feed on his intestines, swearing meanwhile hatred against all Greeks, whom they were determined to destroy. Whether this vile calumny proceeded directly from Antiochus, or whether these fables were only attributed to him, there is no doubt that he blackened the reputation of the Judæans, by spreading the report that Judaism inculcated hatred towards all other

nations. This was all they gained from the accomplishment of their long-cherished wish to be associated with the Greeks.

A veil of grief was drawn over Jerusalem, and the house of Jacob was dishonoured.

"The leaders and the elders moaned, youths and maidens hid themselves, the beauty of the women was disfigured, the bridegroom lifted up his voice in sorrow instead of joyous song, and the bride wept in her bridal chamber." (1 Macc. i. 26–28.)

But this was by no means the end; more sorrowful days were in store for Judæa. Antiochus undertook a second campaign against Egypt, and the Judæans were destined a second time to suffer from his anger, at the unsuccessful termination of the war. The two royal brothers Philometor and Physcon were reconciled by the help of their sister and the Romans; the former was proclaimed king in Alexandria. Antiochus was furious at this; for his desire was to employ the helpless and timid Philometor as his tool, and to rule Egypt through him. As the Romans were still involved in a Macedonian war, he thought he might venture to attack Egypt a second time (168). He entered the country without opposition and pushed on as far as Alexandria; the king of Egypt had meanwhile despatched envoys to Rome to ask for help from the senate. Three Roman deputies were thereupon sent to Antiochus to bid him desist. After the successful battle of Pydna, the destruction of the Macedonian army and the flight of King Perseus (June 22, 168), the three Roman deputies hurried to the camp of Antiochus, and brought him the command of the senate to leave Egypt. When the Syrian king asked for time to consider, the rough Popillius Lænas, drawing a circle with his stick, declared, that before he completed the circle, Antiochus was to state whether he wished for peace or war with Rome. Antiochus knew how inexorable were

Roman commands, and therefore determined to depart immediately (end of June 168).

Antiochus "the Illustrious" returned to his capital. The knowledge of his humiliation tormented him all the more, as he had to feign friendship and satisfaction before the Romans. He vented his secret anger in unparalleled cruelties upon the Judæans. They had, he said, shown pleasure at his degradation; they had proclaimed aloud that the God they worshipped humbled the haughty and had therefore prepared this mortification for him. Apollonius, one of his princely subjects and former governor of Mysia, entered the Judæan capital, accompanied by fierce troops, but with apparently peaceful intentions. Suddenly, however, on a sabbath, when no armed resistance could be expected, the Greek or Macedonian mercenary troops threw themselves on the inhabitants, killed men and youths, took women and children prisoners, and sent them to the slave markets. Apollonius also destroyed many houses in the capital, and pulled down the walls of Jerusalem, for he wished it to disappear from amongst important cities. What induced the madman and his wild troops to spare the Sanctuary? They did not seek to destroy it as Antiochus wanted the Temple for another purpose; but they gave vent to their anger on the walls, burnt the wooden gates, and destroyed the holy courts with hammer and hatchet. Within the Temple there was nothing left to steal. The inhabitants who had not met with death escaped, and only the Hellenists, the Tyrian soldiers, and strangers remained in the deserted places. "Jerusalem became strange to her own children." The Temple was also abandoned, for the faithful priests and Levites had left, and the Hellenists did not trouble themselves about the sacred building; the Acra was their place of exercise in Jerusalem. Here lay the strong Syrian garrison, and here also dwelt

the Hellenists. This place was protected against any attack by high, strong walls and towers overlooking the Temple, and it was filled with arms and provisions.

Solitude soon became unbearable to Menelaus, the original instigator of all these horrors. Of what use was it to be high priest if no worshippers came to the Temple, or to be overseer if the people turned their backs upon him? He was frightened at the mere echo of his own voice. To free himself from this painful position he invented a new and infamous plan. Judaism, with its laws and customs, was to be suspended, and its followers were to be compelled to adopt the Greek faith. Antiochus, full of hatred and anger against both the Judæans and their religion, acceded to Menelaus' plan, and had it carried out with his usual tenacity. The Judæans were to become Hellenised, and thereby reduced to obedience, or, if they opposed his will, they were doomed to death. He not only wished to become master of the Judæan people, but to prove to them the impotence of the God they served so faithfully. He, who disdained the gods of his ancestors, considered it a mockery that the Judæans should still hope that their God would destroy him, the proud blasphemer, and he determined to challenge and defeat the God of Israel. Thereupon Antiochus issued a decree, which was sent forth to all the towns of Judæa, commanding the people to renounce the laws of their God, and to offer sacrifice only to the Greek gods. Altars and idols were to be erected everywhere for that purpose, and, in order to strike an effectual blow at Judaism, Antiochus ordained that unclean animals, particularly swine, should be used at the sacrifices. He forbade, under severe penalty, three religious rites which outwardly distinguished the Judæans from the heathen, namely, circumcision, the keeping of the sabbath and the festivals, and the abstinence

from unclean food. Officials were appointed to see that his orders were carefully carried out, and these officials were hard-hearted men who punished with death any person infringing the royal commands. The Temple was first desecrated, and Antiochus himself sent a noble Antiochian there to dedicate the Sanctuary to Jupiter. A swine was sacrificed on the altar in the fore-court, and its blood was sprinkled in the Holy of Holies, on the stone which Antiochus had imagined to be Moses' statue; the flesh was cooked, and its juice spilt over the leaves of the Holy Scriptures. The so-called high priest Menelaus and the other Judæan Hellenists were compelled to eat of the swine's flesh. The roll of the Law, which was found in the Temple, was not only bespattered, but burnt, because, though it taught purity and humanity, Antiochus maintained that it inculcated hatred of mankind. This was its first baptism of fire. The statue of Jupiter was then placed on the altar, "the abomination of destruction," to whom sacrifices were now to be offered (17 Tammuz, July, 168).

Thus the Temple in Jerusalem, the only holy place on earth, was thoroughly desecrated, and the God of Israel was apparently driven away by the Greek Jupiter. How did the people bear this unparalleled violation? Would they submit to the stern edict of the heartless king and his officials, and allow themselves to be deprived of their nationality and their God? It was a severe and momentous ordeal. Death threatened all those who openly confessed Judaism, and they dared not even call themselves Judæans. But the persecuted people came out of their trial victoriously, and the blood of martyrs sealed their union with God and His Law.

The Judæans who were dispersed in Syrian and Phœnician towns, in closest proximity to the Greeks,

were sometimes forced into conversion, and to submit to the order that bade them deny their religion and sacrifice to the Greek gods. But even amongst these renegades some remained faithful, and sacrificed their lives in endeavouring to carry out their Law. In Antioch an aged man named Eleazer suffered a martyr's death rather than partake of the idolatrous sacrifices. It was related that in some distant part of Judah a mother and seven sons defied death rather than break the Law. These heroic martyrs, both young and old, set a noble example to the Judæans, and the number of those who suffered for their faith increased from day to day. The overseers whom Antiochus had appointed to carry out his decrees directed their attention to the smaller towns, whither the inhabitants of Jerusalem had fled. Here they built altars, and summoned the people in the name of the king to offer swine to Jupiter, and then to eat the flesh, and to break the sabbath by working on the day of rest. They particularly insisted that sacrifices should be offered every month on the date which corresponded to that of Antiochus' birthday. On the Bacchanalian festival of Dionysus, whose jubilee consisted in opening the barrels—they were compelled to deck themselves with ivy like the Greeks, and to utter wild shrieks of joy in honour of the Greek Bacchus. When one of the officials came into a country town and called the people together to give proofs of their secession from Judaism, he hardly found any one to meet him. Many had fled and sought shelter in the caves and ravines of the Judæan mountains, or in the waste land near the Dead Sea. Antiochus was greatly irritated by this resistance, and he issued command upon command to enforce his orders with the utmost cruelty upon the disobedient people. The officials therefore continued their persecutions with redoubled zeal. They tore and burnt

the rolls of the Law whenever they found them, and killed the few survivors who sought strength and consolation in their perusal. They destroyed all houses of worship and education, and if they found poor weak women, just recovering from their confinements, who, in the absence of their husbands, circumcised their sons themselves, these barbarians hanged them with their babes on the walls of the city.

But all such cruelties, instead of intimidating the people, only increased their determined resistance. Death had lost its sting for many, who preferred suffering the last extremity to eating forbidden food. This noble firmness was particularly encouraged by the strictly religious sect of Chassidim. Some of these emerged from their hiding-places, and entering towns and villages, called the inhabitants together, spoke with warmth and conviction, and incited them to be steadfast and constant. Their preaching was all the more effective as they gave proof of indomitable courage in the face of death.

Before long, however, the Syrian commanders in Jerusalem discovered the leaders of this courageous resistance; some reprobate Hellenists had probably betrayed the hiding-place of the Chassidim. Thereupon the Phrygian Philip, commander of the garrison, went in search of the concealed fugitives. On a sabbath he and his soldiers surrounded the caves in which thousands of men, women and children had sought refuge, he summoned them to come out in obedience to Antiochus' commands, and promised them safety if they submitted voluntarily to his orders. They answered unanimously, "We will not obey your commands and break the sabbath." Then Philip ordered his troops to commence the attack. The Chassidim looked on with undaunted courage, but did not try to defend themselves, nor to raise a

stone to close the entrance to the caves, for fear of desecrating the sabbath. Thus calling heaven and earth to witness their innocence, all the people perished in the caves by the hands of the murderous followers of Philip. Some were killed by the firebrands thrown into the caves, whilst others were suffocated by the smoke, which had penetrated into them. Great was the grief of the faithful Judæans when they learned the horrible death of the men who had been to them a light and an example.

The most courageous lost heart. How could this unbearable position last? The faithful were bowed down by the thought that heaven vouchsafed them no visible sign of hope in this their unparalleled trial; no prophet rose up to foretell where this fearful ordeal was to end. When the bloody persecution of the Judæan people had reached such a height that either the destruction of the whole nation, or their submission from exhaustion and despair seemed imminent, a change took place.

It was brought about by a family whose members combined the purest piety with courage, talent, and circumspection; this was the family of the Hasmonæans or Maccabees. An aged father and five heroic sons brought about a revolution and kindled a spirit of enthusiasm, which strengthened Judaism for all time. The aged father, called Mattathias, was the son of Jochanan, son of Hasmonai, an Aaronite; he left Jerusalem in consequence of the desecration of the temple, and had established himself in the small town of Modin, three miles north of Jerusalem. His five sons, who all helped to raise the people from its deep degradation, and found their death in defending their country, bore Aramaic names: Jochanan Gadi, Simon Tharsi, Judas Maccabi, Eleazer Chawran, and Jonathan Chaphus. This family of Hasmonæans, who had many followers, on account of the consideration in

which they were held, all felt the miserable condition of their country with poignant sorrow. "Why should we live, now that the Sanctuary is desecrated and Judæa has become a slave?" Thus spoke Mattathias, to his sons, and he made up his mind not to remain quiet and sorrowing in his hiding-place, but either to help the good cause or to die courageously for it.

When Apelles, one of the Syrian overseers, reached Modin, to summon the inhabitants to become idolaters and to abandon the Law, Mattathias and his sons immediately appeared, and when commanded to set an example of submission, the former answered: "If all the people in the kingdom obeyed the order of the monarch, to depart from the faith of their fathers, I and my sons would abide by the Covenant of our forefathers." When one of the Judæans approached the altar to sacrifice to Jupiter, Mattathias could no longer restrain his wrath, but rushed upon the apostate, killing him at the altar. His sons, armed with long knives, fell upon Apelles and his troops, killed them, and destroyed the altar. This act proved the turning-point, and an example of courageous resistance in contradistinction to inactive despair was thus given by the heroic band. Immediately after this attack upon the officers of Antiochus, Mattathias cried out: "Whoever is a zealous defender of the Law, and whoever wishes to support the Covenant, follow me." Thereupon the inhabitants of Modin and its vicinity followed him to a secure hiding-place which he selected for them in the mountains of Ephraim; and there the remainder of the Chassidim, who had escaped death in the caves, or who had fled from oppression, joined him.

The number of resolute defenders of their country daily increased. Mattathias did not conceal from them that they would have to fight hard battles, but exhorted them to be ready to face

death. Warned by the exaggerated piety of the Chassidim, who had scrupled to move a stone on the sabbath in their own defence, the assembly which surrounded the aged Hasmonæan decided to repulse with arms any attack made upon them even on the day of rest. The Chassidim, who had hitherto been deeply absorbed in the Holy Scriptures, and who were men of quiet, peaceful habits, now steeled themselves to the rougher art of war. A commander who inspires confidence, gives courage to the soldier. The country was suffering from the same hopeless condition which prevailed at the time of the Judges, and at the beginning of Saul's reign. Some of the inhabitants hid themselves in caves, others went over to the enemy and only a small number were willing to sacrifice their lives for their country, and even they had no arms and knew nothing of warfare. Victory seemed more hopeless now than formerly. Mattathias was careful not to wage open war against the Syrians with his small band. Well acquainted with every inch of the country, he entered the towns unexpectedly with his sons and followers, destroyed the idolatrous temples and altars, punished the inhabitants who sided with the enemy, pursued the Hellenists when he came upon them, and performed the sign of the Covenant on the children who had been left uncircumcised. From time to time he destroyed small Syrian troops of soldiers, with whom he happened to fall in, and when the commander of the garrison of Jerusalem sent a larger army to pursue the rebellious Judæans, it was suddenly attacked, decimated and routed. In short, Mattathias waged a kind of petty warfare against the enemy, such as can only be carried on in mountainous districts, but which may wear out the most powerful enemy.

When on the verge of death, the aged Mattathias was preparing for his last hour (167), his followers

were not fainthearted for lack of a leader, the only difficulty lay as to the choice they should make amongst his five heroic sons. The dying father selected Simon, to be the wise counsellor, and Judas, to be commander, and exhorted them all to devote their lives to the Covenant of their forefathers, and to fight God's battle. As soon as Judas Maccabæus was in command, matters took a favourable turn. He was a hero such as the house of Israel had not known since the time of David and Joab, but he was nobler and purer. A feeling of strength seemed to emanate from his heroism, filling all those who surrounded him with the same dauntless courage. He was endowed with the instincts of a general, and this enabled him to fight at the right moment, to take advantage of his enemy's weakness, and to deceive him by false attacks. In the hour of battle, he was like a lion in his rage, and at other times like a dove in gentleness and simplicity. He was as resigned to the will of God as the holiest men of old in Israel, and relied not on his sword, but on God's help, praying to Him before each decisive action. Judas Maccabæus was a true hero of Israel, who only resorted to bloodshed when compelled by necessity in order to recover lost freedom, or to raise a humbled people. He gave his name to the whole epoch.

At first he followed the example of his father, and only sallied out at night, to punish the seceders, to try and regain the wavering, and to harass small bands of Syrian troops. But as the number of his followers steadily increased, augmented by those who were cured of their love for the Greeks by the cruelty and despotism of the latter, Judas ventured to confront a Syrian army under Apollonius. The latter had united the troops in Samaria with other regiments assembled to fight the rebels, for

he had deemed it imprudent to withdraw the soldiers from Jerusalem, or rather, from the Acra. This was the first open battle which Judas fought, and success rewarded his valour. Apollonius was killed, and his soldiers were either slain on the battle-field or driven to flight. Though the number of the defeated Syrians was small, still this victory encouraged the Judæans. They had met the cruel foe face to face, and their daring had triumphed; they considered it a proof that God had not abandoned His people, but still watched over, and protected them. Judas appropriated the sword which Apollonius had lost, and fought with it until his death.

A Syrian commander named Heron, pursued Judas and his followers into the mountains, and guided by some treacherous Hellenists, hoped to crush them with his overwhelming numbers. When the Judæan soldiers first saw the great numbers of men assembled near Bethoron, they cried out, "How can we wage war against such an enemy?" But Judas knew how to calm their fears, and reminded them of the precious treasures they were called upon to defend, their life, their children and the Law. A vigorous attack was made on the Syrians, who were totally defeated. Eight hundred men of Heron's army remained dead on the battlefield, and the others fled westward into the land of the Philistines. This first decisive victory of Judas, at Bethoron, over a much larger army than his own (166), inspired the Judæans with confidence, and filled their enemies with terror; they were amazed both at the strategical power of the Maccabees and at the endurance of the people.

What was Antiochus, the author of all these troubles, doing meanwhile? At first he thought very little about the Judæans, erroneously imagining that his decrees would suffice to subdue and con-

vert them. But when he learned the losses of his army and received the reports of Judas' heroism, he at last admitted that he had underrated his enemy's power of resistance. In the first moment of anger he determined to make an end of his refractory opponents. But he was unable to carry out his plans immediately; he had few troops left and would have been compelled to obtain mercenaries. For this purpose he needed money which was scarce just then, for his extravagant expenditure was greatly in excess of his revenues, and owing to the war with Judas, the taxes were not collected. Other embarrassments were added to these, for alarming news reached him from the east and the north. Arsaces, satrap of Parthia, had revolted against the Syrian-Babylonian Empire, and had freed himself and his people. Artaxias, king of Armenia, totally ignored his fealty to Antiochus and acted like an independent sovereign. The inhabitants of Aradus, and other Phœnician towns, also refused to obey him, and thus his revenues decreased more and more. In order to replenish his treasury he was compelled to wage war against these revolted nations, but to carry on this war, he needed money. Thus he fell from one trouble into another; but, nevertheless, Antiochus, who was greatly incensed against the rebels, managed to collect some mercenary troops for a year. He intended leading half the troops himself against the rebellious provinces beyond the Euphrates, and half of them he entrusted to Lysias, a man of royal parentage, who acted as the representative of Antiochus, and who was entrusted with the education of his son. His intentions regarding Jerusalem were now quite altered. He no longer wished to Hellenise that city; his plan of sending Greek citizens to civilise its inhabitants had been defeated. They had shown themselves incorrigible and quite unworthy of the benefit he wished to confer upon them, and he

therefore determined that they should be exterminated. He commissioned Lysias to march against Judæa with the troops left in his charge, and, after conquering the Judæans, to destroy and uproot every remnant of Israel and every trace of Jerusalem; and the land was to be colonised and divided amongst foreign tribes. The Judæan Hellenists were likewise comprised in this plan of destruction, for Antiochus no longer thought of utilising them. He did not care about the small number who slavishly adhered to his commands. As soon as this plan became known, all the Judæans were seized with terror and despair, especially those who lived amongst other tribes outside Judæa. Would the small but heroic army, under the guidance of the Maccabees, be able to resist the shock of a numerous horde, provided with elephants? In every town, and in every country, where the king's commands became known, great terror filled the hearts of the Judæans, and they fasted and wept. The Elders dressed themselves in their penitential garb and covered themselves with ashes. But this incredibly cruel plan of destroying a whole people, including men, women and children, roused new forces for the defence of their country. Even the more worldly minded men among the Judæans, and those who, though anxious for innovation, had yet not entirely fallen out with Judaism, now joined the Maccabees, for they had no other alternative.

Meanwhile the actual position of affairs was dismal enough. A large Syrian army was expected every moment to crush the Judæan soldiers. It was absolutely necessary, therefore, that the whole nation should be animated with enthusiasm to fight and to endure. A peculiar book was compiled to further this object, and circulated amongst the more educated of the Judæans; this was the Book of Daniel. It was undoubedly written by one of the Chassidim, and intended for his

co-religionists. The object of this apocalyptic and artistically compiled work, written partly in Hebrew and partly in Chaldæan, was to give an example of firmness in adhering to religious convictions, to put them vividly before the reader, and to make him feel that this bloody persecution of the people would not be of long duration. Even the most pious and faithful began to doubt God's mercy, for no prophet appeared to divulge the object of their cruel sufferings, nor to announce when they should cease. The Book of Daniel offered consolation in this respect. The prophetic sayings were not wholly extinct in Israel, for here was a prophecy, which announced the aim and predicted the end of their misery: "There is yet prophecy among us."

The Book first quotes examples of constancy in religious observances under great difficulties and danger, and offers promises of salvation to the pious who were threatened with death; at the end of the book are also contained prophecies for the future. The book further intimates that the kings who violated the Sanctuary or exercised religious despotism would be humiliated and forced to confess their crimes. The Book of Daniel half conceals and half reveals, in a sort of allegory, the destruction of the wicked Syrian Empire, which was the heir of former kingdoms. The fourth kingdom on earth following that of the Babylonians, the Medo-Persians and Macedonians, would utter foolish words against the Almighty, destroy the holy ones, do away with the festivals, and endeavour to change the laws. The holy ones would be given to him "a time, times, and half a time." Then dominion would pass into the hands of the people of the Holy One for ever, and all knees would bow down to Him. In another vision he saw the fourth Syrian Empire extending far away to the south, to the east and to the north, rising to the heavens, and

sending down stars unto the earth to crush it. It would exalt itself over the King of the Hosts of Stars, it would destroy the daily sacrifice, and the place of the Sanctuary. When the question was asked—

"How long shall be the vision concerning the continual burnt offering and the transgression that maketh desolate, to give both the Sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?" (Daniel viii. 13.)

a voice answered—

"Unto two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings; then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed." (verse 14.)

The Book of Daniel, with its mystical revelations, was undoubtedly read with great interest by the Assidæans. The apocalyptic form, which gave each line a peculiar meaning and reflected the actual moment, lent it a great attraction. It had besides solved the problem of the present calamities and shown the object of the horrible persecutions; these were intended on the one hand to destroy sin, and on the other to ennoble believers. The duration of the period of affliction had been determined from the beginning, and this period had its mystical meaning. The worldly kingdoms would disappear, and at the end of this time, God's kingdom would commence, as the kingdom of the holy ones, and those who have died or have been slain during the persecutions would awake to eternal life. Thus though no prophet arose at that time, there was a prophecy.

Meanwhile the danger became more imminent for the Judæans. Whilst Antiochus had marched eastward (166) with part of his army, his representative Lysias had chosen a general called Ptolemy, son of Dorymenes (the one who favoured Menelaus, and who was commander in Cœlesyria and Phœnicia), and two generals under him, Nicanor son of Patroclus, and Georgias. The latter had orders to begin the campaign against the Judæans; and he therefore

led his division, which was erroneously computed at 40,000 cavalry, along the coast into the very heart of Judæa. Samaritans and Philistines, all the arch-enemies of the Judæans, placed themselves at his disposal. He was so certain of victory that he asked slave-traders to come into his camp and to bring with them money and chains. The Syrian commander thought that it would be more prudent to sell the captives as slaves than to kill them; but whilst he was thus prematurely disposing of them, the Judæan warriors, numbering 6,000, assembled round Judas Maccabæus. Before leading them into action, the commander, in order to animate them with the spirit of heroic self-sacrifice, organised a solemn assembly in the mountain city Mizpah. It is a remarkable coincidence that, nine hundred years before, the prophet Samuel had, on a similar occasion, assembled the people in the same place, in order to select a leader against the enemy, who was then planning the destruction of Israel. Judas chose Mizpah, because it had been a central meeting place for those Judæans who had survived the destruction of the Temple under Gedaliah, and also because there was formerly a small Temple there. The assembly was deeply moved; all its members observed a strict fast during the day, wore mourning garments and prayed with all the fervour of their sorrowing hearts for help and pity. A scroll of the Law, which the Judæan army carried with them, was unfolded, and excited great lamentations, for it reminded them that Antiochus wished to force them to abandon the Law and to become heathens.

Meanwhile Judas endeavoured, not only to rouse the people, but to excite their courage and to prepare them for their difficult and bloody struggle. He divided his army into four parts, and placed his three elder brothers in command of divisions. In accordance with the Law, he issued a proclamation to the effect that all those who were

newly married, who had built a house or planted a new vineyard, or who lacked sufficient courage, were to withdraw from the ranks. Having done this, he marched towards Emmaus, eight or nine hours' journey from Mizpah, to meet the enemy. Georgias had encamped, with about 5,000 foot-soldiers and 1,000 cavalry, in the plain near Emmaus, because he thought it was easier to penetrate from thence into the mountains of Judæa, and also to resist the attacks of the whole Maccabæan army. The Syrian leader wished to surprise the Judæans in the night, but was outwitted by Maccabæus. As soon as night set in, Judas left the camp with his followers, marched by well-known roads to the west, and stood in the enemy's rear. When Georgias found the camp of the Judæans deserted, he imagined that fear had driven them into the mountains, and he pursued them thither. This was the object of Judas' stratagem. He followed the Syrians in the rear, reached their camp, set it on fire, and pursued the troops. Georgias only noticed at dawn that the enemy he was seeking in the mountains was following him from the plain; he thereupon hurriedly ordered part of his army to halt, and to confront the Judæans.

Meanwhile Maccabæus placed his division in perfect order, and encouraged them to fight for their country, their Law, and their Sanctuary. His younger brother hurriedly read them a few encouraging verses out of the Law, and gave the warriors the watchword "God's help!" The Judæan army was greater in number than the one division of Syrian troops, and fought with such enthusiasm, that the enemy was beaten and compelled to fly. Judas forbade his soldiers to seize any booty, as they still had to fight the other division of the enemy's army, which was returning from the mountains. These troops shortly made their appearance, and the Judæans stood ready to resume the

battle; but it did not take place, for as soon as the Syrians saw the smoke rising from their camp they turned and fled southwards into the land of the Philistines. "It was a great rescue on that day." The victory of Emmaus (166) gained by clever strategy and patient valour, was of vast importance. It paralysed the enemy, and inspired the Judæans with confidence in their own power. Neither the cavalry nor the foot-soldiers, with their helmets and shields, alarmed them any longer, and the arms which they needed fell into their hands after the enemy had taken to flight. The booty consisted of gold, silver, and purple, and of the sacks of money belonging to the numerous slave-traders who had remained in the camp. All these things were not to be despised, as they became the means of victory to them in future struggles. The victors returned to their meeting-place at Modin with songs of rejoicing, which ended with the verse "Praise the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever."

But they were unable to lay down their arms for a long time; they knew that Lysias, who had received orders to destroy the Judæans, would not let this first defeat pass quietly, but that he would strain every effort to repair the disaster. They therefore remained armed, and had the happiness of seeing their numbers increase to 10,000. If ever a war deserved the name of "holy," the one undertaken by Maccabæus certainly proved worthy of that appellation. In the following year (165), when Lysias attacked Judæa with a powerful picked army of cavalry and foot-soldiers, he found the Judæans more courageous and determined than ever. He had not ventured to enter their land from the same road as before, but had taken a circuitous route, intending to invade Judæa from the part occupied by the Idumæans. He encamped near Bethzur, five hours south of Jerusalem. Mac-

cabæus marched with his 10,000 men to meet him; a regular battle ensued, in which the impetuous attacks of the Judæans again secured the victory over the strategy of the Syrian hirelings. Lysias departed, furious at his defeat; but he flattered himself that by increasing the number of his army he would ultimately master his opponents. Only in the Acra of Jerusalem did the incorrigible Hellenists still remain, with Menelaus and a small Syrian garrison.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### VICTORIES AND DEATH OF JUDAS MACCABÆUS; JONATHAN THE HASMONÆAN.

Return of Judas to Jerusalem—Reconsecration of the Temple—The Feast of Lights—Fortification of the Capital—The Idumæans and Ammonites defeated by Judas—Illtreatment of the Galilean Judæans—Measures against Timotheus—Death of Antiochus—Embassy of the Hellenists to Antiochus V.—Battle at Bethzur—Retreat of Judas—Affairs in Jerusalem—Alcimus—Intervention of the Romans—Nicanor's Interview with Judas—Battle of Adarsa—Death of Judas—Effects of his Career—Condition of the People after the Death of Judas—The Chassidim, the Hellenists, and the Hasmonæans—Jonathan—His Guerilla Warfare against Bacchides—Death of the High Priest Alcimus—Truce between Jonathan and Bacchides—Jonathan as High Priest—His far-sighted Policy—His Captivity and his Death.

165—143 B.C.

THE two decisive battles of Emmaus and Bethoron had entirely altered the position of Judæa. The imminent danger was averted. Three years and a half had passed since the beginning of the religious persecution and the desecration of the Temple (Tammuz, 168—Marheshvan, 165), and, just as the Book of Daniel had prophesied, peace had followed the disastrous excitement of this period. Maccabæus and his followers took advantage of this fortunate moment to march into Jerusalem and to put anend to the desecration which had hitherto held sway there. The aspect of the holy city was deeply distressing to her faithful sons, who had shed their hearts' blood to save her. The town looked like a desert, in which only her enemies were contending with one another. The Sanctuary was deserted,

the doors were burnt, the porches were destroyed, idolatrous altars stood everywhere; the image of Zeus towered on the altar, an emblem of devastation, and statues of Antiochus insulted the Judæans. But the holy warriors had not time to give vent to their sorrow at the general desecration, for they were forced to act quickly for fear of being disturbed in their work of purification. Their first duty was to destroy all statues of Jove, and to remove all unclean objects from the fore-courts (3rd Kislev, 165). They also removed the altar, thinking it unworthy of their sacrifices after it had been so frequently polluted. A council of elders determined to place the stones of the altar in one of the porches of the entrance-court, and to keep them there until the Prophet Elijah should appear and decree what was to be done with them. Meanwhile a new altar was built, new doors were put up, and new vessels were brought to the Temple to replace the old ones. All these preparations were finished in three weeks, and early in the morning of the 25th Kislev (November), 165, the Temple was consecrated with sacrifices and thanksgivings. The two former consecrations certainly could not have been held with greater fervour and devotion. The purest feelings animated the congregation, and the mortal anguish, which they had endured for three years and a half, now gave place to feelings of joy and hope.

The consecration of the Temple not only denoted the victory of the weak over the strong, the faithful over the sinner, but also and especially, the victory of Judaism over Hellenic idolatry, of the God of Israel over idols. All the people from every town of Judæa took part in the festival, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem lit bright lamps in front of their houses as a symbol of the Law, called "Light" by the Poets. The Hasmonæan brothers and the other members of the Great

Council decided that in future the week beginning on the 25th of Kislev should be held as a joyous festival, to commemorate the consecration of the Temple. Year after year the members of the House of Israel were to be reminded of the victory of a small body of men over a large army, and of the re-establishment of the Sanctuary. This decree was conscientiously carried out. For two thousand years these days have been celebrated as the "Days of Consecration" (Chanucah), and lamps have been lighted in every household in Israel. The days derived their name of "Feast of Lights" from this custom. Naturally, the same order now prevailed in the Temple as formerly. Priests and Levites were reinstated in their office; only those Aaronites who had taken part in idolatrous worship were expelled from the Sanctuary. This just severity produced bad results, and increased the difficulty of the position of the Judæans. The priests who were Hellenists and followers of Menelaus thus, prevented from being reconciled with the representatives of the people, became more and more embittered in their hatred against the national pious party. Maccabæus placed his soldiers on guard whilst the Temple was being restored, to prevent the Hellenists from hindering the people in their work, and as soon as the consecration was over, he built a high wall, skirting the hill of the Temple, and two strong towers, well garrisoned, to protect it from sudden attacks from the neighbouring Birah or Acra. He took the precaution of protecting the country in different ways, as he foresaw that the people would have to fight more battles before they could secure their freedom. He also fortified Bethzur, the town from which Lysias had thought of starting with his army. This was to be in particular a stronghold against the Idumæans. The victory of the heroes of Israel over the well-armed Syrian troops increased the burning hatred

of the neighbouring nations against the Judæans, and united them in cruel enmity against the members of the people who dwelt amongst them, or who had fled to them for refuge. They either grudged them their victory or feared their superiority. The Philistines, in the south-west, the Phœnicians, in the north-west; the Ammonites, on the other side of the Jordan; the Syrians and Macedonians in the neighbourhood, and particularly the Idumæans in the south, were alike imbued with hatred of the Judæans.

When driven away from their homes by the Nabatæans, the Idumæans had settled in the old Judæan territory, and had even taken possession of Hebron. They showed themselves the bitter enemies of the Judæans in Antiochus' time, just as they had done under Nebuchadnezzar's despotism; they were ever on the watch for the fugitives, whom they ill-treated, and sometimes even killed. It was therefore very important to reduce them to subjection. Judas first undertook an expedition against the sons of Esau in Accrabattine, defeated them, and drove them from their dwelling-places. He then crossed the Jordan with his army, fought the Ammonites, who were led by a Syrian warrior, Timotheus, an implacable and indefatigable enemy of the Judæans. When Judas had defeated him and the Ammonites, and had taken possession of their capital Rabbath-Ammon-Philadelphia, Timotheus sought shelter in the neighbouring fortress Jæser, commanded by his brother Chaireas. Twenty Judæan youths are reported to have shown wonderful valour by climbing the walls of this difficult fortress and making a breach for the troops to enter. Judas accomplished his object by taking Jæser and the other towns; he obtained peace for the Judæans residing in this part of the country, and inspired foreign nations with respect for the name of Israel.

The Judæan troops had hardly returned to Jerusalem before they received intelligence of the further ill-treatment of their Judæan brethren at the hands of their heathen neighbours. The Judæans turned in their distress to Maccabæus, as the Israelites had done of old to Saul. The inhabitants of Gilead and Bashan informed him by letter that the heathen tribes had collected, with Timotheus at their head, with the intention of utterly destroying them; that 1,000 Judæans had been slaughtered in the province of Tobiene; that the women and children had been dragged into captivity, and that their property had been seized by the enemy. Messengers, with their garments rent asunder, followed upon this missive, bringing letters from the Galilean Judæans, who were threatened with death by the inhabitants of Acco, Tyre and Zidon. They implored Judas to come to their aid before it was too late. He had no need to send messengers with threatening words, like Saul, to call together an army to the assistance of the threatened Jabesh-Gileadites, for he had the army about him, the whole fighting power of the land, who followed him gladly. Maccabæus gave the command of one part of his army to his brother Simon, with orders to march to the assistance of the Judæans of Galilee, whilst he and his brother Jonathan, with the other division, prepared to rescue his oppressed brethren on the opposite side of the Jordan. The rest of the Judæan forces, under the command of two leaders, were to guard the west boundary of Judæa from the inroads of the Philistines. Simon accomplished his task with rapidity and good-fortune. He began by hastening to Acco, where the Judæan inhabitants were being cruelly treated by the Greeks or Macedonians. His well-trained soldiers, meeting with some hostile forces, defeated them easily, put them to the rout and pursued them to the very walls of

the sea-port. This successful feat of arms relieved him from the necessity of further engagements, for the Macedonians of the neighbouring towns did not venture upon encountering the Maccabæan troops. Simon was therefore able to progress unmolested through Galilee and to persuade the Judæans of that province to migrate to Judæa.

A more laborious contest awaited Judas in the Transjordanic provinces, for on his march he again met with the obstinate hostility of Timotheus. As in former ages, the heights were still crowned with fortresses. However, Judas succeeded in reducing several of them; he razed their walls to the ground, disarmed their defenders and delivered some of his imprisoned countrymen. He then assembled the Judæan population, led them across the Jordan, through the friendly city of Bethshean (Scythopolis), and shortly before the celebration of the feast of Pentecost (May, 164) he returned to Jerusalem, with a number of emigrant Judæans from Gilead. From all cities of Judæa the enthusiastic people streamed, to receive the victor and to celebrate the festival with feelings of joy and gratitude. New songs of praise resounded in the Temple.

But Judas soon recommenced hostilities, in order to avenge an injury which had been received. During his absence his two generals, Joseph, the son of Zachariah, and Azariah, whom he had left behind to guard the land in the west, had, contrary to his orders, attacked Georgias, who occupied Jamnia with a force; but they had suffered a defeat and had been driven back to the Judæan mountains. Judas therefore embarked on a new campaign. His arms were again crowned with success, he destroyed several cities on the sea-coast, together with their temples and idols.

Whilst the hero of the Maccabees had been making fearless warriors out of his miserable and

trembling countrymen who lived hidden in caves, whilst he had been inspiring his people with self-confidence, and had been vanquishing the enemy far and near, the court of Syria had remained wrapped in the most complete indifference. What could have induced Lysias, who held the reins of government, to remain passive in the face of this daring defiance? Had he not the means of hiring mercenaries; or did he think the Judæans invincible? It is said that a distinguished man at the Syrian court, named Ptolemy Macron, had advocated the cause of the Judæans, and had declared that the religious restraint imposed upon them was unjust.

Suddenly important news came to Palestine concerning Antiochus Epiphanes. The progress of that monarch through Parthia had not been signalised by any military success; nor had he been able to refill his treasury. Driven by want of money, he undertook an expedition to the city of Susa, in Elymais, to plunder the Temple of the Goddess Anaitis; but the inhabitants resisted the invader and forced him to retreat. He fell sick in the Persian city of Tabæ, and expired in frenzy (164). He who had derided the idea of a Divine Being and Divine justice, who had blasphemed with perfect equanimity all that men hold holy, lost all confidence in himself in consequence of the frustration of his plans. It is quite possible that on his death-bed, he may have repented of his desecration of the Temple, and his attack of frenzy may have resulted from the stings of a remorseful conscience. At all events his last orders savour of madness, for he appointed one of his favourites, Philip, as regent of his kingdom and guardian of his young son Antiochus V., although previous to his departure for Persia, he had invested Lysias with absolute power. This, his dying act, of pitting two rival governors against one another, and at the same time, of dividing

his country into factions, proved fatal to the Syrio-Macedonian kingdom, and to the Seleucidæan house.

The death of Antiochus produced no change in the position of the Judæans. Lysias, who was guardian of the young king, Antiochus V. (Eupator, from 164 to 162) undertook no expedition against the Judæans. Judas Maccabæus took advantage of this inactivity to improve the unsatisfactory internal condition of his country. At that time, there existed in Jerusalem two neighbouring fortified places that were in daily feud with one another, namely the Sanctuary, and the fortress of the Acra, occupied by the Hellenists, who, with their pretended high-priest Menelaus, continued their hostilities against the patriotic and loyal Judæans. In order to ward off their attacks upon the Temple, Judas had surrounded it with a high wall and with towers. But how long were these hostilities to continue? Judas Maccabæus took measures to bring them to an end. He undertook the formal siege of the Acra, and raised earthworks on which he placed catapults, to discharge stones against the walls.

In this emergency some of the Hellenists resolved to have recourse to the young king, Antiochus V. (Eupator), and travelled for that purpose to Antioch. Upon their arrival, they declared that they had been cruelly ill-treated by the Judæan party, on account of their devotion to the royal cause; that they had been robbed of their property, and threatened with death. They also suggested to the king and his guardian, that if the Acra were allowed to fall into the hands of the Hasmonæans, the rebellious Judæans would be utterly unassailable. A council was thereupon held at the Syrian court, and it was agreed to commence hostile proceedings against the Hasmonæans. Ptolemy Macron, who alone spoke in favour of peaceful measures, could gain no hearing.

The flame of war was thus rekindled in the spring of 163 B.C. It was an unfortunate time for the Judæans, as this happened to be a sabbatical year, which was strictly kept by those who would have forfeited their lives for the Law. There could be neither sowing nor reaping, and the people had to content themselves with the fruits of the trees, and with the aftergrowth of the soil, from the last harvest. The garrisons of the fortresses could not be supplied with food.

Lysias, accompanied by the royal child Eupator, and, at the head of a large army with elephants, marched towards the south side of Judæa. Judas could only send a small army into the field, as he required the greater number of his forces for the defence of the Temple and of the fortress of Bethzur. Thus he was compelled to restrict himself to defensive operations. But the garrison of Bethzur fought bravely, and attempted to destroy the siege-train of the invaders. Unfortunately, the scarcity of their provisions would not permit the beleaguered to undergo a long siege, and, moreover, they were betrayed by a traitor, Rodocus, who is accused of having revealed to the enemy the secret ways by which food was introduced into the fortress. At length famine and treachery compelled the garrison of Bethzur to surrender; but they were allowed free egress from the fortress. Relieved on this side, the Syrian army was now able to march upon Jerusalem. Nothing was left to Maccabæus but to meet them in the field. He advanced at the head of his troops to Beth-Zachariah, not far from Bethzur. The Judæans again performed prodigies of valour. Amongst many feats of self-sacrifice, the following is particularly mentioned: Eleazer, one of the Hasmonæan brothers, thinking that the magnificently attired rider of an elephant was the king himself, crept boldly under the animal, stabbed it to death and fell crushed by its enormous

weight. But in spite of the courage and daring of the Judæans, they were obliged to retreat before the superior numbers of the Syrians. Judas re-entered Jerusalem and entrenched himself with his army in the Temple. Lysias soon followed and began a formal siege of the Sanctuary. Judas did not fail to defend himself, and also erected catapults. As the siege continued for a long time, the supplies, which were not plentiful on account of the sabbatical year, were soon consumed by the garrison. Tortured by hunger, the troops began to desert the fortress by subterranean passages. Only Judas Maccabæus, his three brothers, and a small band of devoted followers, remained steadfastly at their post of danger, defying the pangs of hunger. Jerusalem, or more properly speaking, its last place of refuge, the Temple, was very nearly falling, as in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, through want of food; but help came unexpectedly.

Philip, who had been named regent of Syria, by the dying king Antiochus Epiphanes, had raised a large army of Medo-Persians, and was marching upon Antioch to deprive Lysias of the rule. As soon as Lysias heard of the advance of his rival, he was forced to withdraw his troops from Jerusalem to lead them against this new enemy. He therefore persuaded the young king to make peace with the Judæans, and thus a treaty was concluded, the chief condition being that the Judæans should enjoy complete religious freedom, and that the fortress of the Temple should remain inviolate. Lysias agreed by oath to these conditions, but as soon as the gates of the fortress were opened, he ordered his soldiers to raze the walls and the towers to the ground. In no other way, however, did he seek to molest the Judæans, for he neither destroyed nor desecrated the Sanctuary, and he soon commenced his march to Syria, where Philip had taken possession of the capital. Thus the numerous

battles of the Hasmonæans were crowned after all with success, and the Judæans were once more permitted to enjoy religious liberty, and were no longer compelled to sacrifice to Jupiter.

But these wars had another fortunate result: the Syrian court withdrew its protection from the Hellenists, who were obliged to leave their fortress in the Acra. Menelaus, the pretended high priest, the author of untold misery, was sacrificed by Lysias. The latter looked upon him as a firebrand, and had him executed in Berœa (Aleppo), after he had, for ten years, stained his priestly diadem by the most execrable conduct. Jason, who had not rivalled Menelaus in crime, but who had done his best to disturb the peace of his country, had expired somewhat earlier in a foreign land. Persecuted by Antiochus Epiphanes, and driven by the Nabatæan prince, Aretas, out of his country, he had fled to Egypt, but finding no safety there, had wandered from town to town, until, at last, he had found a grave in Sparta.

The truce between the Syrian court and the Judæan people restored peace and order to the country; it was therefore possible and necessary to elect a new high priest, and who could be found worthier of that holy office than Judas Maccabæus? The great Hasmonæan hero was most probably raised to that dignity by Antiochus Eupator, or by his guardian Lysias.

During these days of peace, the warrior was able to lay aside his arms, the peasant to till his fields, and the scribe to devote himself to the explanation of the Law; for the bleeding wounds of the commonwealth began at length to close and to heal; but peace was not to be of long duration.

The excitement, resulting from years of civil warfare, was not so easily allayed, and a veil could hardly be thrown over the past. There were Hellenists who, both openly and secretly, hated

Judas Maccabæus and his devoted adherents, especially the Chassidim, on account of the restraint imposed upon them and the frustration of their efforts. Prince Demetrius, who had been debarred from the succession to the throne of Syria, by his uncle Antiochus Epiphanes, and who had been left by that monarch as hostage in Rome, seized upon a favourable opportunity for quitting that city to depose the son of the usurper and his guardians.

Hereupon Rome sent one of its severest censors to Syria, the envoy Cneius Octavius, not only to pronounce a severe reproof against the regent, but also to destroy his magnificent troop of elephants and to burn his fleet. The orders were carried out without opposition; but Octavius met with his death, at the hand of an assassin, in a bath at Laodicea. But the authorities in Rome were on that account secretly displeased with the court of Antiochus, and purposely overlooked the rebellion of Demetrius. When this prince appeared as an invader in Syria, he gained over the people and the army to his cause and had the king and the regent murdered (162). The discontented Judæan party made use of this change in their rulers to lodge their complaints against the Hasmonæans. They were led by a priest of the name of Jakim, or in Greek Alcimus, the nephew of one of the teachers of the Law, Josê son of Joëzer, but he adhered to the party of the innovators. Alcimus and his adherents, embittered at having been excluded from the Temple and the altar—as was said, with a golden key—repaired to the king of Syria, to whom they gave a gloomy picture of the state of Judæa, ascribing the misfortunes of the country to Judas and his followers. The point of the accusation was levelled against Maccabæus. As long as he lived, they said, the land would never attain the blessings

of peace. This accusation was pleasing to Demetrius, as it gave him an opportunity of asserting his power over a small semi-independent province. But he did not walk in the footsteps of his kinsman, Antiochus Epiphanes, as regarded religious persecution. However, the fact of his being able to name Alcimus high priest and political leader to the Judæan commonwealth, would be a sign that he was master of the people. In order to prevent any opposition to his wishes, he sent Bacchides, a rude, inexorable warrior, with a large troop of Syrians, to Jerusalem. But Judas and his brethren were not deceived by the peaceful advances of the commander. Convinced that their freedom and their lives were at stake, they quitted their beloved city, and retreated to the mountains.

The unsuspicious Chassidim allowed themselves, notwithstanding, to be deceived, and trusted Alcimus, because he was of the house of Aaron. A large assembly of distinguished scribes, possibly the whole body of the Synhedrin, repaired to Bacchides and Alcimus, assuring them of their friendliness and devotion, and begging of them to promote the peace and welfare of their country. Alcimus, the new high priest, solemnly swore that this was his intention; but as soon as he had taken possession of the city, he ordered sixty of the Chassidim to be slain, his uncle Josê being probably one of the victims. This act of perjury and bloodshed spread terror and mourning through the whole country. Again all hearts turned towards the Maccabees, and many of those who had joined the faction of Alcimus left him and sought the Hasmonæan brothers at Modin.

It hardly required a new outrage, perpetrated by Bacchides to light the torch of civil war. The Syrian army had intercepted the march of a number of Judæans, who were leaving Alcimus in a body, had surrounded them near Jerusalem, at Beth Za-

chariah, and after slaying them, had thrown their dead bodies into a cistern. All who loved their freedom and their country, now gathered round the Hasmonæans. But Alcimus succeeded in attracting the ambitious, luxurious and indifferent Judæans, who transgressed the Law. The nation was once more divided into two rival factions. At first the Hellenists were the stronger, as they were under the protection of foreign troops. Alcimus lost no time in marching through the land, in order to force the inhabitants to pay submission to Demetrius and obedience to himself as high priest. Meanwhile the army of the Maccabees was growing in strength and numbers. Judas was once more able to take the field against the Hellenists, and to punish the deserters, and he spread such terror that the adherents of Alcimus did not dare to show themselves outside Jerusalem.

Alcimus placed his hopes of ultimate success in the devotion he showed to the Syrian Court, more than in his popularity among the people. Therefore he hurried to Antioch with fresh accusations against the Hasmonæans. But Demetrius was not alarmed at the rebellion of his Judæan subjects. He sent Nicanor, one of the warriors who had escaped with him from Rome, to Judæa, commanding him to deal severely with the insurgents. This leader, too, considered it necessary to proceed gently at first, until the troops placed at his disposal had arrived. He gave out that having heard of the valour and heroism of the great Judæan commander, he was anxious to become personally acquainted with him; and that to effect a reconciliation between Judas and the king, he would send three confidential envoys to confer with Maccabæus. Posidonius, Beodotus, and Mattathias, were, it was said, acceptable to Judas and his adherents, and an interview consequently took place between him and Nicanor.

The latter was so enchanted with the Judæan hero, that he advised him after the conclusion of the peace to take a wife and bring an heroic race into the world. It is said that Alcimus put an end to this good understanding by informing the king that Nicanor was playing a false part, that he favoured his enemy Judas, and contemplated raising him to the office of high priest. Hereupon the king sent strict orders to Nicanor to cease all negotiations, and to send Judas in chains to Antioch.

Meanwhile Judas, who had been cautioned not to trust Nicanor, had retreated to his mountain fastnesses, whither he was followed by Nicanor and his army. A battle ensued at Caphar-salama, on the confines of Samaria, where Nicanor's army suffered defeat, and was driven back to the fortress of the Acra. Enraged at this repulse, the Syrian renewed hostilities with untiring energy, his chief object being to make Judas prisoner.

He repaired to the Mount of the Sanctuary, there to make known his orders that the hero should be delivered up to him. In vain did the Council come forth to meet him, assuring him of their devotion to the king, for whose welfare they offered up daily sacrifices; he treated them all with rough contempt, and swore that he would burn the Temple down, if Judas were not delivered into his hands.

In order to induce the Judæans to surrender him, Nicanor ordered that the most respected man in Jerusalem, Ragesh, or Razis, called by general consent "Father of the Judæans," should be seized and kept as a hostage, but it was said that Ragesh committed suicide upon the approach of his intended gaoler. Nicanor was now determined to vanquish the Maccabees. He marched out from Jerusalem at the head of an immense army, pitching his camp at Bethoron, whilst Judas, surrounded

by 3,000 of his bravest followers, took up his post at Adarsa. Judæan valour was once more triumphant over the superior numbers of the Syrians. Nicanor fell on the battlefield, and his army fled in utter confusion. The inhabitants of the towns and villages poured forth in pursuit of the fugitive Syrians, and cut off their retreat to Gazara, so that not a single man reached that town. The battle of Adarsa (160) was of so decisive a character that its anniversary was celebrated in years to come under the name of the day of Nicanor. The head and one of the arms of the Syrian commander had been severed from the body, and were hung as trophies on the walls of Jerusalem. Judas and the Hasmonæans were once more masters of Jerusalem, since Alcimus had withdrawn himself even before the battle.

Judas, aware of the insecurity of his position, and believing that Demetrius would avenge the destruction of a part of his army, took a step of doubtful wisdom—that of making overtures to the all-powerful state of Rome. He entrusted two of his countrymen with the important mission—Eupolemus, the son of Jochanan, of priestly family, and Jason, the son of Eleazer. They were both proficient in the Greek tongue. But hardly had they reached the end of their journey before Judas was obliged once more to draw his sword.

Demetrius, upon hearing of Nicanor's defeat, had sent an immense army, commanded by the merciless Bacchides, to Judæa. This general marched through Galilee, killed all the Judæans whom he met on his way, and in the spring-time of the year encamped before Jerusalem. Judas had again been obliged to leave the capital, because, stripped as she was of her walls, she afforded no shelter. He issued a proclamation to the men and youths of Judæa to come forward and fight for their fatherland, their Law, and their freedom, but

only 3,000 responded to the call. Led by Judas, these troops marched south, encamping near Eleasa, because the mountains in the north were no longer safe. Bacchides followed the Judæan army with 20,000 foot and 2,000 mounted soldiers, taking up his position at Birat, near Bethlehem. Confronted with this vast host the Judæan warriors lost heart. They declined to give battle for the moment, but insisted upon dispersing to await fresh reinforcements. In vain did Judas employ all his eloquence to urge stedfastness upon them. The greater number deserted, leaving only eight hundred men to support Judas. Selecting the most valiant of this little band, he successfully attacked the right wing of Bacchides, and drove the enemy to the confines of Ashdod. But the small troop of Judæan soldiers left behind was not able to withstand the desperate onslaught of the Syrian army, and when Judas returned from the pursuit he was obliged to devote all his energy to the deliverance of his followers. He and his band of picked men performed wonders of bravery. There were wounded and dying on both sides, and the battle lasted from morning till evening. But the Judæan army became smaller and smaller, until it was entirely surrounded by the enemy. At last even Judas Maccabæus fell like a hero, sword in hand. The rest of the soldiers fled from the battlefield, and the Maccabæan brothers, under cover of the general confusion, were able to save the body of their heroic commander from the contempt or ill-usage of the enemy.

The defeat at Eleasa or Birat (160) seemed to have rendered useless all the previous Jewish victories. The lion-hearted troop of Hasmonæans were dispersed, Alcimus once more took possession of the Temple and the Holy City, and was therefore able to triumph over his antagonists.

But the long years of Maccabæan warfare had not been in vain. They had roused the people from their torpor, and had given them a second youth. The blood of martyrs is said to heal wounds. In truth all old wounds were healed by this willing sacrifice of so many lives. From without, the shame that appeared to taint the Judæan nation had vanished. The contemptuous Greeks, who had felt the force of Judas' arm, no longer derided the Judæan people, and the Judæans were no longer required to prove their equality with the Greeks by joining in the Olympian games. From within, the Judæans had learnt to know themselves and their mission; they proved themselves to be God's people, destined to guard His law and His teaching, and capable of defending those precious gifts. Entire self-sacrifice, taught by the prophet Elijah to a few disciples, and preached by the second Isaiah in fiery eloquence, had become, through the action of the Maccabæan warriors and martyrs, the recognised duty of the whole nation.

Judas Maccabæus had breathed out his heroic soul on the battlefield of Eleasa. The whole nation mourned for him, and justly, for it had become orphaned by his loss.

The sublime enthusiasm that had led to the valiant deeds of the Maccabees, that had moved singers to extol the Lord "in new songs" could not be of lasting duration. It was the result of exalted spiritual condition, and, in the natural course of things, would give way to a corresponding state of indifference. An entire nation could not continue in arms from year's end to year's end. Besides which, the principal cause which had prompted a warlike rising had ceased to exist. For it was no longer demanded of them to deny the God of Israel, or to sacrifice to Jupiter. One of the conditions of the truce that Judas Macca-

bæus had concluded with the young king Antiochus Eupator, or with his general or regent Lysias, was the religious freedom of the Judæans. Demetrius I. did not interfere with this concession.

In the Temple at Jerusalem, the sacrifices were offered up according to law, and although the high priest, Jakim or Alcimus, was not a favourite of the people, yet unlike his predecessor Menelaus, he came of priestly descent. But the party of the Hellenists still held the fortress Acra in Jerusalem, whence they menaced the faithful with the destruction of their city, and the violation of their Temple. The conqueror, Bacchides, after the death of Judas, had made them masters of the land, and they were resolved to misuse their authority in order to bring about the downfall of the pious Judæans.

Actions that would have roused noble natures to active measures did not seem important enough to warrant the short-sighted, and above all things, ease-loving people to take any decided steps against their enemy and to hazard their own safety and that of their belongings, unless a voice of authority called upon them to act.

But after the death of Judas Maccabæus there was no one who could claim absolute authority.

Although the Hasmonæan brothers were beloved by the people, they had not the power of summoning the whole nation to their standard, and they were only looked upon as a party.

In fact, after the death of Judas there were three distinct parties amongst the people, and this party spirit was a symptom of the reviving character of the Maccabæan wars. First, there were the pious Chassidim, or Assidæans as they are more generally called, whose very existence depended upon the essence of Judaism. Then came their persistent antagonists, the Hellenists, amongst whose members were the servants

of the Temple, the priests, the old and distinguished family of the Odura, and the sons of Phasiron. Lastly, the Hasmonæans, who had raised themselves to great power in a short time and whose leaders were the three remaining sons of Mattathias, Jonathan, Simeon and Jochanan. The Hasmonæans resembled the Assidæans in their love for Judaism and the Sanctuary, but they differed from them, in their wider perception, in their greater knowledge of outward circumstances, in their manly energy, which could not be deterred from its purpose by any adverse circumstances. They were not content with having prevented the violation of the Sanctuary, or with having obtained the recognition of their religious rites; but they longed to rid themselves of the causes productive of misfortune to their country. A Psalmist describes them most accurately in these words: "The praise of God is in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hands." They could not bear to contemplate the Judæans under the hateful yoke of the Greeks, or to know that Judaism depended for its very existence upon the whim of a Syrian despot, or the intrigues of a treacherous party. Not only did Judæa require religious freedom, but also political independence. But the Hasmonæans feared that they lacked the strength to found an independent Judæan commonwealth. Thus they determined to rely upon extraneous aid, and for this purpose they desired to connect themselves with the Roman state, and it appears also with the Parthians, who had freed themselves from Syrian rule. But it was this worldly policy that incensed the Assidæans. They put their trust in God alone, and could only imagine warfare conducted according to biblical precedent; they believed that God would confound the enemy in a miraculous way, and considered that to seek foreign help was synonymous with want of confidence in God. "It

is better to trust in the Lord than in man," they quoted, "it is better to trust in the Lord than in princes." This disunion between the two parties had possibly been instrumental in separating the Assidæans from the Hasmonæans, thereby reducing the number of the Maccabæan warriors, a circumstance which may have helped to contribute to the fall of Judas. Of the three parties, the Hasmonæans alone had a chance of being ultimately the leaders of the nation. The Hellenists had destroyed their prospects by breaking too entirely with the observances or prejudices of the people, whilst the views of the Assidæans were of an intensely narrow character, and they were too fond of their own undisturbed repose to infringe it by seeking a remedy for the state of anarchy in which Judæa was plunged.

Confusion was indeed rampant at that time. Whenever Hellenists and Hasmonæans met, a disgraceful conflict was the result; no voice of authority forbade such practices, there was hardly a court of justice, where a plaintiff could demand redress. Famine did but increase this miserable state of things.

We are told by one of our most trustworthy historians, "that there was great sorrow in Israel at that time, greater than there had been at the close of the prophetic age."

In their anguish the unfortunate people turned to Jonathan Chaphus, hoping that he would humiliate the Hellenists and restore peace to the country. But Jonathan did not possess the warlike energy of his brother Judas, nor was he supported by the whole nation. He was more of a politician than a general. Too weak to attack the army that Bacchides had quartered in Judæa, he was merely able to take measures of defence. Threatened by the Syrian host, the Hasmonæans entrenched themselves in the woodland country on the shores of

the Jordan; but, fearful of an overpowering attack, they prepared to send their wives and children across the river to the friendly Nabatæans. On the way, however, this peaceful troop was suddenly attacked by a warlike tribe, that of Bene Amri, from the city of Madaba, and with their leader Jochanan, the Hasmonæans were put to the sword—a deed of infamy that was subsequently avenged by Jonathan.

But even in their hiding-places, in the valley of the Jordan, the Hasmonæans found no rest. Bacchides sought them out, attacked them on the sabbath day, when they were not exactly forbidden to defend themselves but when they were less prepared for resistance, and forced them to swim the river and find safety on the opposite side. The whole country was now at the mercy of the enemy. Bacchides restored the fortresses, re-garrisoned the strong places, the Acra, Bethzur and Gazara, storing them with provisions and with weapons. He assured himself against the treachery of the people by seizing upon the children of the most distinguished families and placing them as hostages in the Acra. Thus, in the space of one year (160-159) Bacchides succeeded in entirely putting down all armed opposition to the Syrian rule, a feat that not one of the previous Syrian commanders had been able to accomplish in six years.

The hero of the Maccabees was sorely missed. Had King Demetrius wished to make any important changes in the religious condition of the Judæans he could not have chosen a more opportune moment; the strength of the people was broken, and their leaders were banished from the scene of action. But the successor of Antiochus Epiphanes, sunk in a life of debauchery, was content with having assured himself of the sovereignty of Judæa, and of the annual payment of the tribute money. The Syrian court, even after the death of Alcimus, troubled itself but little, if at all, about the religion

of the Judæans. Although he was disliked by the people, the high priest Alcimus did not belong to the extreme Hellenists. He was merely an ambitious man who always worshipped the rising power. The offence with which he was reproached appears, on closer examination, hardly to have been a sin aimed against the religion of the Judæans. It appears that between the inner and outer courts of the Temple was a kind of screen, named, on account of its fragility, "Soreg." This screen, the work of the prophets, as it was called, was used as a boundary, which no heathen, no unclean objects of any sort or kind might pass to penetrate into the Temple. But Alcimus gave orders for the destruction of this partition, probably with the intention of admitting the heathen within the sacred precincts. The pious Judæans were justly incensed, and when Alcimus was seized, directly after this command, with paralysis of speech and of body, from which he never recovered, they attributed his fatal illness to Heaven's wrath.

After the death of Alcimus the Syrian court left the office of high priest unfilled, evidently with the intention of destroying even this semblance of independence on the part of the Judæans. For seven years the Temple had no high priest, and the country no political head. Probably the priestly functions were carried on by a substitute for the high priest, under the name of Sagan. We hear nothing more of Syrian hostilities. Bacchides left the country, and Judæa was at peace for two years (159-157).

Jonathan and Simon, the leaders of the Hasmonæans, made use of this peace to strengthen themselves and to arm their followers. They were entrenched in the fortress Bethagla, in an oasis of the desert of Jericho, within the grateful shade of a wood and near a stream of running water. The river Jordan protected their rear.

In preparing for war Jonathan had no other purpose than that of many a Bedouin chieftain, to infringe upon the peace concluded by the governors of the land; but as the sympathy of the people went with him, and as he carried his sword in a holy cause, his voice soon gained authority. Without doubt the harm he did to the Hellenists was considerable, for we hear of their carrying fresh complaints to the Syrian court. But as Demetrius was hopelessly indifferent, and as Bacchides was weary of undertaking a guerilla warfare at great disadvantage to himself, they remained inactive, whilst the Hellenists proposed to fall treacherously upon Jonathan and Simon, and to deliver them as prisoners to the Syrians. An ambush was laid for the two commanders, but the conspiracy was revealed, and the Maccabees were able to take measures of defence upon this occasion. Fifty Hellenists were seized and executed. Bacchides, who had counted upon a rapid conclusion to the conspiracy, felt himself entrapped into a new war, and proceeded to besiege the Hasmonæans in their fortress of Bethagla. But the Judæan army had grown to so large a force that it was possible to divide the troops. Thus Jonathan and his followers defeated the Hellenists, who supported Bacchides in the open field, whilst Simon with his division succeeded in burning the siege machines of the enemy. Hampered on both sides, and with a considerable loss of soldiers, Bacchides was forced to raise the siege of Bethagla, and as an outlet for his rage executed several of the Hellenists in his army. This was an appropriate moment for Jonathan to demand and obtain a truce. The condition agreed upon was that Jonathan should return to Judæa unmolested, but that he should not be permitted to inhabit Jerusalem. Hostages were demanded as a pledge of his word, and prisoners were exchanged. Bacchides then marched out of

the land, leaving his allies, the Hellenists, unprotected.

Jonathan took up his position in the fortress of Michmash, where Saul had once fixed his headquarters. He was now the acknowledged head of the Judæan people, and showed a firm front to its enemies. The terror of his name was a guarantee of peace. For five years "the sword no longer reigned in Israel." How this state of things would have finally ended is difficult to say, but it is certain that without the aid of an unexpected piece of good fortune the dream of the Hasmonæans could never have been realised.

A revolution in the Syrian kingdom effected a complete change in the fate of Judæa. It became imperative to invest Jonathan with supreme power.

An obscure youth of Smyrna, Alexander Balas, was the cause of this revolution. He happened to bear an extraordinary likeness to the late king of Syria, Antiochus Eupator. This similarity of feature prompted Attalus, king of Pergamum, to induce Alexander to play the part of pretender to the throne. Alexander, richly supplied by Attalus with money and troops, was recognised by the Roman senate as heir to the kingdom of Syria. Demetrius, now rudely awaked from his day-dreams, began to look about him for allies. Above all he was anxious to gain Jonathan to his side. This led him to write a flattering epistle to the Hasmonæan commander, calling him brother-in-arms, and entreating him to collect his forces and to procure weapons. The Judæan hostages were at once to be set free.

Jonathan did not neglect so favourable an opportunity. He hurried to Jerusalem, repaired the walls and fortified the city. The Hellenists sought refuge in the fortress of Bethzur. But Alexander, who was also in want of help was equally eager to enlist Jonathan in his cause, and knew how to

make him look most favourably upon his claims. He nominated Jonathan high priest, sent him a robe of crimson and crown of gold, thus declaring him tributary prince of the Syrian kingdom and friend of its monarch.

Jonathan donned his priestly garment and officiated for the first time as high priest in the Temple upon the Feast of Tabernacles(152); he was the first of the Hasmonæans who had gained so great a distinction and who was able to hold it for any length of time.

Thus Judæa, brought to the very brink of total destruction by a war of twenty years, was saved at last, by the valour and self-sacrifice of a handful of warriors. The sufferer's part which she had had to play for so long was now to be exchanged for that of an active and heroic one.

Jonathan greatly contributed to the growing power of the nation during his rule (152-144). He justly divined which side he should espouse in the struggle for the Syrian crown. He allied himself to Alexander, although Demetrius, like all who have nothing left to lose, was profuse in the most liberal offers. Ignoring the high priest, this monarch wrote direct to the Judæan people, promising to free them from their imposts, to return three provinces to their jurisdiction that had once been added to Samaria, to recognise Jerusalem as a sanctuary and even to give up the important Acra. He declared that he would defray the means for conducting divine service in the Temple out of his own royal treasury, reserving for that purpose the revenues of the town of Ptolemais, still in the hands of his opponents. The Judæan army was to be raised at Syrian cost, all preferments and rewards given according to Syrian custom, and the forces consisting of 30,000 men, were naturally to serve as his allies. Even the Judæans, settled in the Syrian provinces, were, out

of consideration for this alliance, to be secure from all foreign interference, and were to be exempt on all sabbaths and festivals and for three days before and after the festivals from being called before any court of justice.

But nothing could bribe the Judæan people to separate themselves from Jonathan; they were not blinded by these brilliant prospects, and their leader was too well acquainted with the character of Demetrius, to give heed to his promises. Thus he allied himself with Alexander, aided him in crushing his rival and never had cause to regret the step that he had taken. The usurper loaded Jonathan with marks of favour, and gave great prominence to the fact that the friendship of the Maccabæan chieftain had materially helped him to the Syrian throne. When he entered the city of Ptolemais, to receive the daughter of the Egyptian monarch, Ptolemy VI. Philopator, as his bride, he invited Jonathan to meet him, and the two kings entertained the Judæan warrior as their equal.

During the reign of Alexander Balas (152-146) Judæa revived from the cruel wounds that despotism and treachery had dealt her, and was soon able to call 10,000 men into the field. Jonathan on his side treated Alexander with unalterable loyalty. For when Demetrius II., the son of Demetrius I., contested, as rightful heir to the throne, the sovereignty of Syria, Jonathan upheld Alexander's cause most strenuously, although that monarch was deserted by Egypt and Rome.

The Maccabæan chieftain began by opposing the advance of Demetrius' general Apollonius on the shores of the Mediterranean. He besieged and took the fortress in the sea-port town of Joppa, destroyed the old Philistine city of Ashdod, that had declared itself for Apollonius, and burnt the Temple of the god Dagon. As a reward for his services, Jonathan received from Alexander the city

of Ekron, with the surrounding country, which from that time was incorporated with Judæa (147).

The Syrian people were now divided in their allegiance, some of them acknowledging the usurper Alexander, and others the rightful king Demetrius II., but Alexander was at length treacherously slain. In the general confusion resulting from these events, when a part of the nation, and the army went over to Demetrius II. and a part remained true to Alexander, the house of Jonathan was able to besiege the Acra, the stronghold of the Hellenists.

The besieged turned for help to the Syrian king, and Demetrius II., eager to overthrow the powerful Maccabæan, listened to their appeal, marched to their rescue, and commanded Jonathan to meet him at Ptolemais. But when Jonathan obeyed and came with rich presents, Demetrius thought that his alliance might be of use to himself, and not only did he abandon his march upon the Acra but he confirmed Jonathan in his priestly office.

Jonathan, well aware that the king was in sore need of money, offered him 300 talents in exchange for a few districts of land and for the promise of the exemption of the Judæans from all taxation. The compact was made, written, and placed for security in the Temple; but Demetrius, in spite of his solemn protestation, soon regretted having freed the Judæans from their imposts. No Syrian monarch was ever known to be loyal to his word or to refrain from recalling favours granted in some pressing moment of danger. The Judæan army meanwhile was soon to enjoy the unexpected triumph of inflicting the same degradation upon the Syrian capital that the Syrians had so often inflicted upon Jerusalem. Demetrius had excited the discontent of his people to such a degree that they actually besieged him in his own palace at Antioch, and his troops, who were clamouring for pay, refused to aid

in his deliverance. Thus he felt himself in the unpleasant position of being compelled to seek the help of Jonathan's Judæan troops. The 3,000 men sent by the high priest destroyed a portion of the Syrian capital by fire, and forced the inhabitants and the rebellious soldiers to release their king and sue for pardon. But no sooner was Demetrius at liberty than he treated his deliverer with the basest ingratitude. Jonathan, therefore, refused to come to his rescue, when a general of Alexander Balas, Diodotus Tryphon by name, conspired against him, attempting to place Antiochus VI., the young son of Alexander Balas, on the throne of Syria. Demetrius was forced to fly from his capital. Embittered at the faithlessness of the Syrian monarch, and grateful to the memory of Alexander, Jonathan espoused the cause of the young king and his regent Tryphon. The latter confirmed him in his priestly office, and permitted him to wear the gold clasp, the insignia of an independent prince. Simon, his brother, was made commander of the Syrian forces on the shores of the Mediterranean, from the ladder of Tyre to the Egyptian confines.

Bravely did the Hasmonæan brothers fight for Antiochus, upon the triumph of whose cause the freedom of the Judæans depended. Victory and defeat succeeded one another alternately; but at last the Hasmonæans besieged and took several towns, and finally entered Damascus. They drove the Hellenists out of Bethzur and re-garrisoned that fortress. Beyond all things they were determined to make Jerusalem impregnable. They rebuilt her walls, extending them eastwards to the vale of Kidron, thus creating a defence for the Holy Mount; they erected a fortress in the middle of the city, facing the Acra, thus cutting off the Hellenists' means of communication with the country, and they filled up the moat "Chaphenatha," which divided the Holy Mount from the city, and which was but

partially bridged over, and thus brought the Temple, as it were, closer to the town.

But Jonathan would not attempt the siege of the Acra, partly because he might have given umbrage to his allies, the Syrians, and partly because he did not dare to concentrate all his forces at one point, for the generals of the fallen Demetrius still gave signs of resistance. At that time Judæa could boast of an army 40,000 strong (144-143).

Subsequent events proved plainly enough that the prudence evinced by the Hasmonæans at the outset of this campaign was not exaggerated. As soon as the treacherous general, Diodotus Tryphon, felt himself secure of the Syrian army he determined to overthrow the puppet king Antiochus, and to place the crown upon his own head. But the greatest hindrance to the attainment of these ends was Jonathan himself, who, true to the memory of Alexander, was the devoted champion of the rights of Antiochus, and who, moreover, was in possession of a great part of the sea coast. Tryphon was well aware that Jonathan would not become a party to his treachery, so he determined to rid himself of the high priest, and thus weaken the followers of the young king. But a course of open violence being impossible he resorted to craft, and actually succeeded in outwitting the most cunning of all the Hasmonæans. Upon the news of Tryphon having entered Scythopolis at the head of a powerful army Jonathan hurried to oppose him with 40,000 picked warriors. To his amazement he was most courteously received by the Syrian commander, and loaded with presents. Entirely duped by so flattering a reception, he was persuaded by Tryphon to dismiss the greater number of his troops and to follow his host into the seaport city of Acco (Ptolemais), a fortress that Tryphon promised should ultimately belong to Judæa. Of the 3,000 soldiers remaining with Jonathan 2,000 were

now sent to Galilee, 1,000 alone following their chief. But hardly had they passed the gates of the fortress before Jonathan was seized and made prisoner by the treacherous Tryphon, whilst the Syrian garrison fell upon his men and massacred them. After the accomplishment of this infamous deed the troops rushed out in pursuit of the Judæan soldiers, who were stationed in the plains of Israel and Galilee. But the Judæans had already heard of the fate that had befallen their brethren, and they turned and gave battle to the Syrians, putting them to flight. With the report of Jonathan's death they entered Jerusalem, and great was the consternation of their sorrow-stricken brethren. They believed that their beloved Jonathan had fallen, like his thousand followers at Acco, a victim to the faithless commander. A new Syrian yoke seemed impending with its usual terrible results, and the Hellenists, they surmised, had been instrumental to their misfortunes. There was, in reality, a secret understanding between Tryphon and the remnant of the Hellenists; the Syrian commander helping these rebellious and unpatriotic Judæans from without, whilst the latter were ready with their aid from within should the Judæan capital be besieged. But Simon Tharsi, the last of the Hasmonæans, was happily to avert this twofold danger. In spite of his great age he was a man of such lofty enthusiasm and such singular heroism that he was able to rouse the people from despair to hope. When he exclaimed to the multitude assembled in the outer court of the Temple: "I am no better than my brothers who died for what they held most sacred," the Judæans replied with one voice: "Be our leader, like Judas and Jonathan, your brothers." Placed at the head of the nation by the people themselves, Simon was determined to secure Jerusalem from a treacherous stroke on the part of the enemy, either from without or from within her walls.

He sent a Judæan contingent under the leadership of Jonathan ben Absalom to Joppa, in order to prevent the landing of the Syrian army, whilst he assembled his forces at Adida.

Tryphon, accompanied by his prisoner Jonathan, had already passed out of Acco with the intention of falling upon Judæa, which country he imagined would have been paralysed by his act of treachery. He was determined, moreover, to intimidate the Judæans into subjection by threatening to assassinate their high priest. But upon hearing, to his amazement, that all Judæa was in arms, and that Simon was the leader of the people, he began cunningly to enter into communication with the enemy. He pretended only to have made Jonathan prisoner for the purpose of securing one hundred talents of tribute money which the Judæans used formerly to pay to Syria, and promised that if this indemnity were forthcoming, and Jonathan's two sons were delivered up as hostages, he would release his prisoner. Simon was in no way deceived by this artifice of Tryphon, but trembling to incur the reproach of having caused his brother's death, he paid the tribute money and delivered up the hostages. Tryphon, however, had no intention of making peace with the Judæans; on the contrary, he was at that very moment taking a circuitous road to Jerusalem, not daring to run the risk of meeting the Judæan forces in the open. He might safely have reached the capital had not a heavy snowfall, most unusual in those hot climates, made the mountain roads of Judæa impassable, and forced him into the trans-Jordanic country.

Enraged at this defeat of his plans, he caused Jonathan to be executed at Bascama (143). The remains of the great Maccabæan high priest and commander were ultimately recovered, and buried by Simon and the whole people at Modin, in the

burial ground of the Hasmonæans. Thus ended the fourth of the Hasmonæan brothers; he achieved more than his predecessors had done, and more than his successors could do; for he raised the Judæan republic from the very lowest depths to an eminence whence she could hardly rise higher. It is true that Judas Maccabæus had performed more numerous deeds of valour, and had gained a more brilliant military renown than Jonathan, but the younger brother had given his people power and importance, and by virtue of his priestly office had conferred lasting distinction upon his family.

After the death of Judas, the Judæan nation was as great as she had been in the days of the sanguinary Antiochian persecutions; but after Jonathan's death, the first principles of a real State were recognised in her—a foundation for much that was to come.

If we may compare Judas Maccabæus to the the Judges of the Biblical age, then we may liken Jonathan to King Saul, who attempted to steer in troubled waters, and who in his own person made an era in the history of his time. As Saul united the dispersed tribes, and moulded them into a powerful people, so did Jonathan, by his priestly crown, unite the divided factions, and make them a strong and independent nation. Neither did the death of King Saul, nor that of the High Priest Jonathan, although both were deeply mourned by the people, necessarily put an end to the nation's unity, because in neither of these parallel cases did the unity of Judæa depend upon one individual, but upon the consciousness of the nation. As Saul found a worthy successor in his son-in-law David, so did Jonathan in his brother Simon.

Of Jonathan's descendants, only one daughter is mentioned. She was married to Matthatias ben Simon Psallus, and was the ancestress of the his-

torian Flavius Josephus. At the same era in which the Judæan State was growing and developing out of political trials, Judæan teaching on another platform, was asserting an independence, by which in time it was to influence the civilization of the whole world. The political growth of Judaism was being matured in Judæa, the intellectual or spiritual growth in Egypt.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE JUDÆANS IN ALEXANDRIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF SIMON.

The Judæan Colonies in Egypt and Cyrene—Internal Affairs of the Alexandrian Community—King Philometor favours the Judæans—Onias and Dositheus—The Temple of Onias—Translation of the Pentateuch into Greek—Struggle between the Judæans and Samaritans in Alexandria—Affairs in Judæa—Independence of Judæa—Simon's League with the Romans—Overthrow of the Acra and of the Hellenists—Simon's Coinage—Quarrel between Simon and the Syrian King—Invasion by Cendebæus—Assassination of Simon.

160—135 B.C.

THE magic land of the Nile, once the cradle and the school of suffering of the children of Israel, became at this period the school of learning for the Judæan nation.

The settlement of the Judæans in Egypt was as much encouraged by the Greek rulers of that country, as it had been in former ages by the dynasty of the Pharaohs. They occupied a strip of land lying between the Lybian desert in the north, and the confines of Ethiopia in the south. They increased as rapidly as they had done in the days of their forefathers, and they numbered one million of souls at the expiration of a century from their first arrival in their adopted country.

In Egypt and Cyrene the Judæans enjoyed similar rights to those of the Greek colonists. They were so proud of this equality that they watched over their privileges with a jealous eye. It is impossible to say from whom they originally held them, whether from Alexander or his successors. The Judæan colony in Egypt began to

play an active part at the time when the Egyptian and Syrian courts were somewhat hostile to one another, when both were eager for the possession of Judæa and were therefore both anxious to secure the alliance of the Judæans. But the Egyptian Judæans had always been faithful adherents of the Ptolemaic royal house, and Philometor, the sixth prince of that dynasty, had cordially received the numerous fugitives who had fled from Judæa during the persecutions of Antiochus.

Conspicuous amongst those emigrants were several Judæans of distinguished families, as well as the son of the high priest Onias. They were treated with respect by the Egyptian rulers and were able at a later date to give proof of their intelligence and their learning. The far-seeing court of Egypt insisted upon the friendliest reception of the Judæan malcontents, in order to make sure of their undivided support in the reconquest of Judæa from Syrian rule. For neither Egypt nor Syria could possibly have divined that the opposition of the Judæan patriots to the Syrian armies would have led to what may be called the independence of Judæa.

The Judæans were principally concentrated in Alexandria, which city was second only to Rome in political importance and commerce, and to Athens in its love of art and knowledge. Of the five divisions or districts of Alexandria, which were designated by the first letters of the Greek alphabet, the Judæans occupied nearly two; especially the district of the Delta, lying upon the sea coast, had become an exclusively Judæan colony, and its commanding position pointed out to the Judæans their choice of occupation. The cargoes of grain that Rome imported for her legions from the rich plains of Egypt were undoubtedly laden upon Judæan ships and taken into the market by Judæan merchants. They

carried the wealth of Egyptian harvests to less fertile countries, as Joseph their ancestor had done before them. Great prosperity was the result of their spirit of enterprise, and with prosperity life grew more refined and luxurious. But commerce was not a monopoly in the hands of the Judæans any more than it was their only pursuit. Their love of acquirement, and their great aptitude for learning, enabled them to catch some of the artistic power of the Greeks, and they thus succeeded in reproducing the raw products in beautiful harmonious textures. Judæan artizans and skilled workmen leagued themselves into a kind of guild, and when labour was required in the Temple of Jerusalem the Alexandrian-Judæan community supplied the master hands. Moreover, the Alexandrian Judæans applied themselves to learn the arts of war and of statecraft, as held by the Greeks. They acquired the melodious Greek tongue and made a profound study of Greek learning, many of them reading and understanding Plato as easily as the books of Moses and the writings of King Solomon.

Prosperity, worthy pursuits, and culture inspired the Alexandrian Judæans with a feeling of dignity and self-respect, and in this they may be compared to their descendants in Spain, of a much later date.

The Alexandrian community was looked upon as the centre of the Judæan colony in Egypt, and other Judæan colonies, including Judæa herself, were glad to lean at times upon this firm pillar of Judaism. Houses of prayer were established in all parts of the city, bearing the name of Proseuche. Amongst them was the principal synagogue, distinguished by its graceful architecture and its magnificent interior. These houses of prayer were at the same time schools of learning, where the most accomplished student of the Law would stand up on sabbath and festival days to expound that portion

of the Pentateuch that had just been read to the congregation.

But the greatest ornament of the Alexandrian-Judæan world were the distinguished fugitives who arrived in Alexandria during the Syrian persecutions. The most illustrious of these was Onias IV., youngest son of the last legitimate high priest, a descendant of Joshua ben Jozadak.

After his father had been treacherously murdered, on account of his determined antagonism towards the Hellenists and the hated Hyrcanus, the young Onias fled for safety to Egypt. There he was kindly received by the gentle King Philometor, possibly because he had a large party on his side, who looked upon him as the rightful successor to the priestly dignity; and the sixth Ptolemy, hoping ultimately to wrest Cœlesyria and Judæa from Syrian rule, believed that he might rely upon the support of this party and of the faithful Syrian Judæans.

As soon as Onias, who had now reached man's estate, heard that the wicked high priest, Menelaus, had been assassinated by order of the Syrian Court, and that Prince Demetrius had escaped from Rome to invade Syria, he flattered himself that he would be allowed to return as high priest to Judæa. His protector, the king Philometor, had meanwhile become an ally of Demetrius, and had probably put in a good word for his favourite. But when Alcimus had been chosen high priest, and had been supported by an armed force, even against the wishes of the Hasmonæans, then Onias gave up all hope of receiving the priestly inheritance of his father, and took up his permanent abode in Egypt.

He had not fled alone to his adopted country, but had been accompanied by a man of great distinction, Dositheus by name, and both men were called to play a great part during the reign of

Philometor. They were given the opportunity of distinguishing themselves by the enmity of two brethren, the reigning kings of Egypt, the gentle Philometor and the violent Euergetes. The latter was a monster in body and in mind, and was called, on account of his enormous size, "the *heavy-stomached* (Physcon)" and on account of his diabolical wickedness, "Cacergetes."

The two brothers, with their sister Cleopatra, who was the wife of her elder brother, had all ascended the throne in the same year, when Egypt and Syria happened to be at war with one another. But Physcon, the younger brother, had seized the throne for himself, supplanting the elder one, who fled as a supplicant to Rome. The Roman Senate acknowledged the rights of Philometor, but always greedy for an extension of power, resolved to make use of this opportunity to weaken Egypt. It decreed, therefore, that the north-western province of Cyrene should be separated from the Egyptian kingdom, and placed under the rule of Physcon. But this prince, dissatisfied with his small territory, repeatedly conspired against Philometor, and the two brothers were soon at open variance. Philometor dared to defy Rome, who had taken Physcon's part; but unfortunately his soldiers were unreliable; for the Alexandrian-Greek population, besides having all the usual faults of the Greeks, were remarkable for faithlessness and caprice. Still more did Philometor lack commanders. In this hour of emergency he entrusted the Judæan emigrants, Onias and Dositheus, with the command of the campaign against his brother. The entire population stood by Philometor. The ability of the two Judæan leaders enabled him to weaken Physcon effectually. From that day Onias and Dositheus were held in great favour by Philometor, and they remained commanders of the entire army.

Separated as the Judæans were by their own laws and customs from the Egyptian and Greek inhabitants of Alexandria, they were singularly fortunate in having a man at their head of sufficient authority to knit them together, and to make an independent commonwealth of their community. Onias was recognised by the Judæans as head, or prince of the race (Ethnarch)—he may have been unanimously elected to that office by his country, and established in it out of gratitude by the king, or Philometor may have raised him to this dignity at his own initiative.

In time this office became a very important one, for the ethnarch was bound to control all the affairs of the community, to exercise the duties of a judge and to protect the integrity of all treaties. He represented his people at court and the royal commands were issued in his name. The office of ethnarch, which Onias was the first to hold, offered too many privileges to the Egyptian Judæans for them to have objected to it.

For instance, they were now in the fortunate position of having a leader of royal dignity who was able to mould them into one strong body. Their strength was to be enhanced by a new creation amongst them. In spite of the distinction which Onias enjoyed at the court of Philometor, and amongst his own race, he could not forget that on account of the events that had been taking place in Judæa, he had lost his rightful office of high priest.

During the uncertain state of things in his own country, when Alcimus was raised above the rightful family of the priesthood, and after his death, when this dignity seemed extinct, Onias had lit upon the thought of building a Temple in Egypt that should take the place of the violated sanctuary in Jerusalem, and of which he would be the rightful high priest.

Was he prompted to such an undertaking by piety or ambition? The innermost workings of the heart are not revealed in history. To secure the approval of the Judæans, Onias referred to a prophecy of Isaiah xix. 17, "On that day there will be an altar to the Lord in Egypt." Philometor, to whom he expressed his wish, out of gratitude for his military services presented him with a strip of land in the region of Heliopolis, four and a-half geographical miles north-east of Memphis, in the land of Goshen, where the descendants of Jacob had once lived until the exodus from Egypt. In a ruined idolatrous temple in the small town of Leontopolis, where animals had formerly been worshipped, Onias built the Judæan sanctuary (154-152). Outwardly, it did not resemble the Temple of Jerusalem, for it was made of brick, and it rose in the shape of a tower. But all the necessary appliances for the interior were on the exact model of those in Jerusalem, except that the seven-armed candlestick was replaced by a golden lamp hanging from a golden chain. Priests and Levites who had fled from the persecutions in Judæa, officiated in this Temple of Onias. The king generously decreed that the whole district of Heliopolis should supply the requirements of the Temple and the priests. This small province was formed into a little oligarchy and was called Onion. It was another bond of union for the Egyptian Judæans.

Although the community looked upon the Temple of Onias as their religious centre, visiting it during the festivals, and sacrificing in its courts, still unlike the Samaritans, they did not withdraw their allegiance from the sanctuary of Jerusalem, or in any way depreciate it; on the contrary, they venerated Jerusalem as their sacred metropolis, and the Temple as a divine spot. But the wonderful fulfilment of the prophetic words, "That in Egypt a temple should arise," drew them fondly,

proudly, to their own building. They called Heliopolis the city of justice, applying to it this verse from the prophets, "Five Egyptian cities will at that day recognise the God of Israel, and one of them will be called the City of Heres," but they called it Ir-ha-Zedek.

Had Judæa been enjoying a state of peace and prosperity, she would have resented such an innovation, and would have laid an interdict upon the Temple of Onias, as she had done upon that of Gerizim, and the Egyptian-Judæan congregation, had they persisted in their apostasy, would have been excluded from the community, as had been the case with the Samaritans. But the desolation of the Temple in Jerusalem was so great, the dismemberment of the commonwealth so complete, that there could have been no valid reason for preventing the accomplishment of a design springing from the purest of intentions. The founder of the Temple was descended from a long line of high priests, whose origin dated from the days of David and Solomon, and his forefathers had been instrumental in rebuilding the Temple after the Babylonian exile. He claimed Simon I. as one of his ancestors, and the pious Onias III. was his father. Thus by right was Onias IV. fully justified in the line of conduct that he had chosen. Later, when the Hasmonæan high priest had revived the Divine service in Jerusalem, in all its entirety and splendour, the Judæans of the mother country looked with displeasure upon the Temple that existed in a foreign land, and the extreme party never could forget that it owed its very existence to a disregard of one of their laws. But by that time the Temple of Onias had taken firm root in the strange soil and had nothing to fear.

Philometor was allowed to build a fortress for the protection of the Temple in the province of Onion, and placed the stronghold and garrison under the

command of Onias, who was at the same time military commander of the district of Heliopolis, called the Arabian province, hence his title Arabarch. Alexandria was, however, the capital of Onias' community, and in the province of Onion and Arabian Egypt he was looked upon as the governor of the whole Judæan population.

The complete confidence that this king reposed in Onias and in his countrymen and co-religionists induced him to raise the high priest to another post of importance. The sea-ports and the mouths of the Nile were of the greatest consequence for the income of the royal treasury. Here taxes were levied on all incoming and outgoing raw materials, and on the finely-woven textures, the export of which made Egypt the richest country whilst under the rule of the Ptolemies, and at a later time, whilst under that of the Romans. Onias was entrusted with the custody of the ports, and the Alexandrian Judæans living upon the sea-coast had, no doubt, the power of selecting the officials for the custom-houses.

On this same platform of Egypt another far more important and significant event was now about to take place, an event which was judged, at a later date, in two opposed ways. The devotion of the Judæan fugitives to their laws and to the customs of their mother-country may have awakened in the cultivated King Philometor the desire to become acquainted with the time-honoured Torah of Moses; or perhaps those Judæans who were allowed access to the person of the king may have stimulated his interest in obtaining some knowledge of their laws, so shamefully reviled by Antiochus Epiphanes, until Philometor was at last eager to read them for himself in a translation.

It is also possible that the insulting libel composed with regard to the Judæans and their origin, written in the Greek tongue apparently by an Egyptian

priest, Manetho, who describes the Israelites as being a noted shepherd race in Egypt (Hyksos), expelled as leprous under a leader called Moyses, may have been calculated to make the king anxious to search for the history of that people from its very origin. Whatever may have been the nature of the inducement, it was indeed an important fact that the sublime Pentateuch should have been translated into the Greek tongue.

We have no particulars of the way in which this work was brought about. According to all appearance, and probably to lighten the task, it was divided among five interpreters, so that each book of the Pentateuch had its own translator. The existing translation is a proof that, owing to manifold corruptions, the work lost much of its original character, that it was not uniformly treated, and that it could not therefore have issued from one pen.

The Greek translation of the Torah might be looked upon as a temple erected to the glory of God in a foreign land. The accomplishment of this task filled the Alexandrian and Egyptian Judæans with intense delight: and they thought, with no little pride, that now the vainglorious Greeks would at last be obliged to concede that the wisdom taught by Judaism was at once more elevating and of more ancient date than the philosophy of Greece. Their satisfaction was doubtless enhanced by the fact that the noble work owed in part its successful termination to the warm sympathy of the friendly king, who thus, as it were, opened a new path for Judaism into Greece. It was natural, therefore, that great rejoicings should take place among the Egyptian Judæans on the day of presentation of the version to the king, and that its anniversaries should be observed as holidays. On that day it was customary for the Judæans to repair to the Island of Pharos, where they offered up prayers of joyful thanksgiving. After

that religious ceremony each man partook of a festive repast, according to his rank, either in a tent or under the free vault of heaven, with his family and belongings. Later on this anniversary became a national holiday, in which even the heathen Alexandrians took part.

But far different was the effect produced by the translation of the Torah into Greek upon the pious inhabitants of Judæa. Greece was the object of their hatred on account of the sufferings they had endured at her hands, and the indignities she had inflicted upon their sanctuaries; and they now feared, not unnaturally, that the Law would be disfigured and perverted by its translation into Greek. The Hebrew language, in which God had revealed Himself upon Mount Sinai, alone appeared to them worthy of being the means by which to transmit the Divine teaching of the Torah. When the Law was presented in a foreign tongue, the pious Judæans deemed Judaism itself altered and profaned. Consequently the commemoration of the translation, which was celebrated as a festival by the Judæans in Egypt, was kept by their brethren in Judæa as a day of national mourning, similar to that upon which the golden calf had been worshipped in the desert, and this day became numbered amongst their fasts.

Different as were the points of view from which the work was regarded, if we consider the results produced by the Greek translation, we shall see cause both for the joy of the Alexandrian and the sorrow of the Palestinian Judæans. Thanks to its Grecian garb, Judaism became known to the Greeks, who were the civilisers of the world; and before half a century had elapsed, all the principal nations had become acquainted with its teachings. The Greek translation was the first apostle Judaism sent forth to the heathen world to heal it of its perversity and godlessness. Through its means the

two opposing systems—the Judæan and the Greek —were drawn nearer together. And on its subsequent circulation throughout the world by means of the second apostle, Christianity, the tenets of Judaism became fused into the thought and language of the various nations, and at present there is no civilised language which has not, by means of this Greek translation, taken words and ideas from Judæan literature. Thus Judaism became introduced into the literature of the world, and its doctrines became popularised.

On the other hand, there arose a misunderstanding and darkening of the Judæan Law, as if a false prophet were promulgating errors in the name of God. The difficulty of translating from Hebrew into Greek, two such radically different languages, at no time an easy task, was greatly increased at that period by the want of exact knowledge of Hebrew and of the contents and true meaning of the Torah, which made it impossible for the translator always to render correctly the sense of the original. Moreover, the Greek text was not so carefully preserved but that occasional alterations, considered emendations, might be introduced into it. Added to this the translation was probably read on the Sabbath and holidays, and it depended upon the taste, learning, and discretion of the reader to make what changes he pleased. And, in fact, the Greek text is full of additions and so-called improvements, which later on, in the time of the conflicts between Judaism and Christianity, became still more numerous, so that the original form of the translation cannot always be recognised in its present altered state. Nevertheless the Alexandrian Judæans of later generations believed so firmly in the perfection of this translation that by degrees they deemed that the original could be dispensed with, and depended entirely upon the translation. Thus they came to look upon the mistakes which had

crept into the Greek Bible either through ignorance, inability to cope with grammatical difficulties, or voluntary additions, as the word of God, and occasionally things were taught in the name of Judaism which were entirely foreign or even contrary to it. In one word, all the victories gained during the lapse of years by Judaism over civilised heathendom, as well as all the misconceptions which ensued, were the effects of this translation alone.

The great estimation in which this work was held by the Judæans, and in time also by the heathens, seemed to demand for it a higher sanction and unquestionable authority. Accordingly more than a century later a Judæan writer brought forward a false origin of the translation, which declared that it was due to the steps taken by Ptolemy Philadelphus, whose attention had been awakened to the value of the Book of the Law by his librarian Demetrius. The king, it was pretended, sent his ambassadors to the high priest Eleazer with costly presents, requesting him to choose several wise men, equally versed in Hebrew and in Greek, and to bid them repair to his court. The high priest selected seventy-two learned men, taking representatives from the twelve tribes, six from each, and sent them to Alexandria, where they were received with great pomp by the king. The seventy-two delegates finished the translation of the Torah in seventy-two days and read it aloud before the king and all the assembled Judæans. It was from this legend, looked upon till recently as an historical fact, that the translation received the name of the Seventy-two, or, more briefly, of the *Seventy*, Septuagint.

When once a beginning had been made it was natural that a desire should arise to render the other literature of Judaism accessible to Greek readers, and so, by degrees, the historical books also appeared in a Grecian garb. On account of the greater

difficulties they offered, the poetical and prophetical books were not translated at the same time as the Pentateuch and the historical books. The translation of the Pentateuch into Greek gave birth to a new art in the Egyptian community—that of pulpit oratory. Was it also, perhaps, customary in Judæa, when the Law was read, not only to translate the portion into the language then in use among the people (the Chaldæan or Aramæan), but to explain it for the benefit of the ignorant, and was this practice also introduced into the houses of prayer of the Egyptian Judæans? Or was it adopted by the latter because the Hebrew language had become foreign to them? However, whether it was an imitation or whether it originated with the Egyptian Judæans, this custom of translating and explaining obscure verses and portions not easily understood, created a new art. The translator, incited by the flow of language, for which the Greeks were remarkable, was not satisfied with merely rendering the original text, but expanded it, adding his own remarks, and drawing from it applications to contemporary events, and notes of admonition and warning. Thus out of the explanation of Scripture arose the sermon, which, according to the Greek spirit of giving to all things an attractive and beautiful form, became by degrees artistically developed. Pulpit oratory was the child of the Alexandrian Judæan community. It was born in their midst, it grew up and was perfected, becoming later a model for other nations. The charm which the Hellenistic Judæans found in the Biblical writings now made accessible to them awoke among the learned the desire to treat of those writings themselves, to bring to light the doctrines contained in them, or to clear up their apparent crudities and contradictions. Thus arose a peculiar Judæo-Greek literature which spread and bore fruit, influencing an ever widening circle. But little is known

of the infancy of this singular literature which held, as it were, two such repellent nationalities in close embrace. That literature appears also to verify the fact that rhythmic and measured sentences are more pleasing than simple prose. There are still some fragments of these writings extant which relate, in verse, the old Hebrew history. These poetical writings roused the anger both of the Judæans and Samaritans. These two people agreeing in their adherence to the Law, in their recognition of one God, and in their condemnation of idolatry, still retained their old hatred against each other. Although the Samaritans, forced by the officers of Antiochus, had been compelled unwillingly to renounce the worship of the God of Israel, yet they had not assisted the Judæans to fight their common enemy, but had rather stood by the side of the latter, against their own co-religionists.

During the religious persecutions many Samaritans appear to have emigrated into Egypt and to have joined the descendants of their own tribe who had been established there since the time of Alexander. These Egyptian Samaritans had, like the Judæans, adopted the customs and the language of the Greeks which prevailed in Egypt. The enmity which had existed between the adherents of Jerusalem and of Gerizim continued to exist in a foreign land, where they opposed each other with that furious zeal which co-religionists in a strange country are wont to exhibit in support of cherished traditions. The translation of the Torah into Greek, which had been so greatly assisted by the favour with which the work was regarded by the king Philometor, appears to have cast a new firebrand into their midst. How fiercely must the anger of the Samaritans have been provoked by the omission in the text of the Septuagint of that verse which they looked upon as a proof of the sanctity of their Temple, "Thou shalt build an altar in Gerizim"?

The Samaritans in Alexandria desired to make a protest against the translation, or rather against the alleged falsification, of the text, and as some of their number were in favour at court they induced the mild Philometor to appoint a conference between the two religious sects at which the superior sanctity of the Samaritan or of the Judæan Temple should be decided. This was the first religious conference held before a temporal monarch. The two parties chose the most learned men among them as their advocates. On the side of the Judæans appeared a certain Andronicus, the son of Messalam, whilst the Samaritans had two champions, Sabbai and Theodosius. In what manner the religious conference was carried on, and what its consequences were, can now hardly be ascertained, the accounts that have come down to us having assumed a legendary form; each party claimed the victory, and both exaggerated its effects. Religious conferences have never yet achieved any considerable results. The Judæan historians pretend that an arrangement had been made to the effect that it should be the right and the duty of the king to put to death those who were defeated in argument —a statement for which there is no foundation. They likewise pointed out the long roll of high priests from Aaron down to their own time who had officiated in the Temple at Jerusalem, enriched as that Temple was by holy gifts from the kings of Asia, of which advantages and distinctions the Temple at Gerizim could not boast. Thus the Samaritans were publicly declared to be vanquished, and according to the agreement they were put to death. The Samaritan accounts, which are of a much later date and more confused, ascribe the victory to their side.

This controversy respecting the superior sanctity of Jerusalem or Shechem was, it appears, carried on in Greek verse. A Samaritan poet, Theodotus,

praised the fertility of the country round Shechem, and in order to magnify the importance of that city he related the story of Jacob, describing how he rested there; also the ill-usage which his daughter Dinah had received from the young nobles of Shechem, and the revenge taken upon them by her brothers, Simeon and Levi. In opposition to Theodotus, a Judæan poet, Philo the Elder, exalted the greatness of Jerusalem. In a poem on Jerusalem, he extolled the fertility of the Judæan capital, and spoke of its ever-flowing subterranean waters, which were conducted through channels from the spring of the High Priest. The poet endeavoured to enhance the sanctity of the Temple in Jerusalem, which stood on Mount Moriah, on the summit of which Abraham had been about to offer up his son Isaac—an act which shed everlasting glory upon all his descendants.

Meanwhile, the sky which during the reign of Philometor had shone so brightly over the Judæans in Alexandria became dark and threatening. It seemed as if the parent state and its offshoot were linked together for good or evil. An alternation of prosperous and adverse days appeared to visit each community almost at the same time. Through the misfortune of Jonathan, Judæa had fallen into adversity, and a new reign in Egypt had brought trouble and sorrow to the Judæans in Alexandria. That same Ptolemy VII., who had reigned many years with Philometor, conspired to destroy him, and after his death sought to obtain the crown in spite of the existence of a rightful heir. The novelty-loving, fickle and foolish populace of Alexandria was inclined to recognise as king the deformed and wicked Physcon. The widowed queen, Cleopatra, who had governed during her son's minority, had likewise many adherents, and in particular Onias was devoted to her cause. When war broke out between Cleopatra and her hostile brothers, Onias

with his Judæan army received as share of the spoil one district or province. At last a compromise was effected, in virtue of which Physcon was to marry his sister, and both were to reign together. This incestuous marriage was most unhappy. No sooner had the inhuman Physcon entered Alexandria than he put to death, not only the followers of the rightful heir, but also the youth himself, who was slain on the very day that Physcon married Cleopatra. Bitter enmity was the consequence of this cruel deed between king and queen, brother and sister. The sensual and barbarous monster, who violated his wife's daughters, filled Alexandria with terror and bloodshed, causing the greater part of the inhabitants to fly from the city. Was it likely that he should spare the Judæans who, as he well knew, were the supporters of his hated sister and wife? Having heard that Onias was bringing an army to her assistance, he ordered his soldiers to seize all the Judæans in Alexandria, with their wives and their children, and to cast them bound and naked to be trampled to death by elephants. The animals were intoxicated with wine in order to irritate and excite them against their helpless victims. But the latter were rescued from impending death in a manner which seemed miraculous to the trembling, unhappy Judæans. The enraged beasts rushed to the side where the king's people were seated awaiting the cruel spectacle, and many of them were killed, while the Judæans were unhurt.

The Alexandrian Judæans kept the day of their heaven-sent deliverance as a perpetual memorial. From this time Physcon appears in reality to have left the Judæans in peace. Indeed, during the remainder of his reign their literary ardour and their zeal for the acquisition of knowledge increased greatly, and their writers appear to have applied themselves undisturbed to their works. Physcon

himself was an author, and wrote memoirs and memorabilia, dealing with historical events and facts in natural history. A Judæan called Judah Aristobulus is said to have been his or his brother's master.

Whilst the Alexandrian-Judæan community was taking up a high intellectual position, the Judæan people in their own land attained a lofty political eminence from which they could look proudly back on their former abject state. What progress they had made during the reign of Jonathan is clearly shown by the simple comparison of their condition after his death, with that in which they found themselves at the fall of Judas. Judas' successor had only been able to draw around him at first a handful of faithful followers; a leader without right or title, he possessed neither fortresses, nor means for defence or attack, and was hard pressed by enemies at home and abroad. Jonathan's successor, on the contrary, Simon Tharsi, the last of the heroic sons of Mattathias, became at once the ruler of a powerful people, with a well-recognised title and the dignity of high priest. He found strong fortresses in the land, and but one enemy in his path who had already been much weakened by his predecessor. Jonathan's death, therefore, was followed by no disastrous results to the nation, but the anger of the whole people was inflamed to avenge the noble Hasmonæan high priest upon his crafty murderer. Simon had only to step into the vacant place of governor. Although approaching old age at the time when he became the leader of his people, he still possessed the freshness of youth and the fiery courage which marked him when his dying father directed him to be the wise counsellor in the then impending war against Syrian despotism. So vigorous was the Hasmonæan race that few indeed of their members could be accused of weakness, and the greater number of them evinced till their last breath the strength and courage of youth. By

the side of Simon stood his four sons, Johanan, Judah, Mattathias, and one whose name is unknown, who had all been moulded into warriors by the constant fighting in which they had been engaged. Simon, following the policy of his brothers, took advantage of the weakness of the enemy to increase the defences and strength of his country and to extend the dominion of Judæa; but he achieved even more, for he delivered his people completely from Syrian rule and raised Judæa to the rank of an independent nation. Simon's government, which lasted almost nine years, was therefore rightly described as glorious. During that time the aged were allowed to enjoy their closing days in peace, while the young rejoiced in the exercise of their activity and strength, and every one could dwell undisturbed under his own vine and fig-tree.

Simon's first step was an act of independence. Without waiting, as had been the custom hitherto, for the permission of the Syrian princes, he accepted at once the office of high priest offered him by the people. Foreseeing the attacks that act might call down upon him, he hastened to provision and place in a state of defence the fortresses of Judæa, and to renew his intercourse with Demetrius II., who had been dethroned by the usurper, and owed his deliverance, which he basely repaid by ingratitude, to Jonathan's assistance. Simon sent him by a solemn embassy a golden crown as an acknowledgment of his regal power, and, under the condition, that by the exemption from payment of taxes or services the independence of Judæa should be fully recognised, he offered him help against Physcon. The result justified his calculations. Demetrius willingly accepted Simon's offer, hoping by this mission to assure himself of a faithful ally in the vicinity of his kingdom, who would assist him

in a possible war against Tryphon. He wrote to the high priest as a friend of the king, to the elders and the Judæan people, as follows: "We have received the golden crown which you have sent us, and we are ready to make a lasting treaty of peace with you, and to write to our administrators that we remit your taxes. What we have granted you, shall endure. The fortresses that you have erected shall be yours for ever. We absolve you from all the voluntary or involuntary faults you have committed against us to this day, and we remit also the money you owe the crown and the taxes that were laid on Jerusalem. If there be any among you anxious and fit to enter our army they may be received in it, and let there be peace between us." The day on which complete liberty had been granted was considered by the Judæans so important and valued an era, that its date, the 27th of Iyar (May), was kept as a half-holiday among the days commemorative of victory.

The people looked upon these concessions of Demetrius as the inauguration of their independence, and from that epoch the customary manner of counting time according to the years of the reigning Syrian king was discontinued. They now reckoned from the date of Simon's accession to the government. Thus, in all public documents in the year 142 we read, "In the first year of the High-Priest Commander of the Army and Prince of the Nation, Simon." Confident in their strength, the people anticipated this royal prerogative for their leader, who was not at that time entitled to it, for he had not as yet been recognised as king by Syria or by the choice of the nation. Simon himself does not appear to have looked upon the concessions received as sufficient to bestow complete independence upon his country, but dated his reign from a later year, when he obtained the right of coining money. The joy experienced by the inha-

bitants of Jerusalem at the recovery of their freedom, the loss of which they had hitherto so bitterly bewailed since the destruction of the Judæan kingdom, under their last king Zedekiah, was so great that the elders or members of the Great Council felt impelled to communicate the all-important event to the Judæans in Egypt. In doing so, however, they had to encounter one difficulty, for there Onias still lived, the founder of the Temple of Onias, the descendant of the family of high priests which, by the acts of the Hasmonæans in Judæa, had been completely and hopelessly supplanted. Even supposing that Onias or his sons had entirely relinquished the prospect of ever possessing the office of high priest, it must have been painful to remind them, and their Judæan followers in Egypt, that their family had been thrust on one side by the people in Judæa.

The representatives of the nation managed to pass lightly over this difficult subject, and descanted upon the fact that, after their long sufferings and persecutions, God had heard their prayer, and had given them once more the power of offering sacrifices, of rekindling the holy lights, and of placing the shew-bread in the Temple, which had been spoiled by the enemy, and polluted by the shedding of innocent blood. This statement, which deliberately avoided giving any offence to the susceptibility of the Judæans in Egypt, appears to have produced a very favourable impression upon them. They also rejoiced at the recovered independence of Judæa, and ascribed great importance to the year in which it was obtained.

The second noteworthy act of Simon consisted in driving out the remaining Hellenists from their various hiding-places in the Acra at Jerusalem, and in the fortresses of Gazara and Bethsur, and in completely destroying any influence they may have

possessed. Gazara surrendered unconditionally. Simon allowed the Greeks to leave the place, and ordered their dwellings to be purified from all their idolatrous images. The Greeks in the Acra, however, had fortified their position so well that Simon was obliged to lay siege to it, and to reduce its defenders by famine. At last they were overcome, and the victors entered the Acra to the sound of music and with solemn hymns of praise. In commemoration of the taking of the Acra, the 23rd Iyar (May 17) was ordered thenceforth to be kept as a day of rejoicing. The Hellenists were driven out of Bethsur apparently with little difficulty. Some found refuge in Egypt, others renounced their idolatrous practices, and were received again into the community, whilst those who remained unchanged fell victims to the religious zeal of the conquerors. It is related that the 22nd Elul (September) was set apart among the days of victory—because it saw the death of those idolators who had allowed the respite of three days to elapse without returning to their faith. Thus at length disappeared entirely that hostile party which during nearly forty years had shaken the foundations of Judaism, and which, in order to achieve its destruction, had called down upon the people the calamity of foreign and civil war and cruel religious persecution, bringing their fatherland itself to the verge of ruin. The fortresses which Simon had taken from the Hellenists, Bethsur and Gazara, he remodelled, and they became places of defence for the Judæans. Of great importance, likewise, was the capture of Joppa (Jaffa), by the acquisition of which seaport the State received a large revenue; the export and import duties, which the Syrian kings had introduced, falling now to the share of Judæa.

The newly-recovered Acra underwent various changes at the hands of the last of the Has-

monæans. The wrath of the people had been too much excited against this fortress to allow of its standing intact. There was likewise a religious as well as a political feeling adverse to its continuing unaltered. The fortress, with its lofty towers, which the Syrians had erected to keep the city in check, overtopped the Temple-capped Mount itself, and this was not to be. According to the prophecies of Isaiah, in the last days the Mount on which the Temple stood should rise above all other mountains, and be higher than all other heights. This was literally explained to mean that no mount or building should soar above the Temple, and Simon, if even unconvinced himself, was obliged to bow to that belief. On the other hand, however, it seemed imprudent to destroy a fortress which, like the Acra, was so conveniently situated for the accommodation of troops, and so well fitted to serve as a storehouse for arms. Simon and his counsellors hit upon a middle course in dealing with it. The towers and bastions of the fortress were taken down, a work of destruction which it is said cost the people three years to accomplish; the walls, courts and halls, on the contrary, were left standing, but the hated name of Acra or Acrapolis was no longer used, but changed for that of Birah (Baris), which had first been introduced by Nehemiah. In this transformed edifice the Judæan soldiers were quartered, and there they kept their weapons. Simon himself dwelt in the Birah in the midst of his soldiers; he appointed his son Jochanan (John) governor of the sea-coast of Gazara.

In spite of the favourable position in which he found himself, Simon was obliged to remain armed and prepared for war. At present the two pretenders to the throne, whilst they weakened each other, left him in peace. Demetrius II.

(Nicator), who had granted independence to Judæa, was now engaged in an adventurous expedition eastward against Persia. His brother, Antiochus Sidetes, governed in his place, and was at strife with Diodotus Tryphon, who, having, in the most crafty manner, killed Jonathan as well as the young Antiochus, the son of Alexander Balas, had made himself ruler over Syria. Simon, urged by political motives to weaken as much as possible this cunning, evil-minded enemy, assisted Antiochus Sidetes, and received from him the confirmation of the freedom granted by his brother to Judæa in the hour of his need. Antiochus likewise gave Simon the right of coining money, which was the especial mark of independence.

Unfortunately, as is but too often the case, the same hand which planted the tree of liberty, also placed the gnawing worm in the noble blossom. Wanting as he was in that far-sightedness which belonged to the genius of the prophets of old, and guided only by present emergencies, Simon believed that he would ensure the hard-won independence of his country if he obtained for it the protection of that people which, while it never tired of making conquests and aggrandizing itself, was constantly and everywhere the foe of liberty. In order to shield himself from the ceaseless provocations of the petty Syrian tyrants, Simon entrusted the welfare of his country to the mighty tyrant, Rome, who was wont to suffocate in its close embraces the nations who sought its protection. Simon despatched delegates—Numenius, the son of Antiochus, and Antipater, the son of Jason, bearers of a heavy golden shield, and a golden chain, which they were to present as a mark of homage, in the hope of gaining for the Judæans the favour of being received as allies of Rome.

The Roman Senate was not indisposed to enroll

the most insignificant nation among their allies, being well aware that in granting the favour of their protection they had taken the first step towards reducing it to vassalage. Rome, like an unfaithful guardian, took infinite care of the property of its ward, only to gather riches for itself. The Roman Senate made known to their friends and vassals that they had accepted Judæa as their ally, and Syrian rulers were forbidden to attack it (140). Two hundred years had hardly elapsed when a shameless, bloodthirsty Roman Emperor insisted upon being worshipped in the Temple at Jerusalem, and after another thirty years had passed, Rome had broken the strength of the Judæan nation, killed its heroes, and hunted its sons like wild beasts. But these dire results of the Roman alliance were unsuspected by Simon or his contemporaries, who rejoiced at being called friends, brothers, and allies by the great Roman nation. In order to show their gratitude to their leader for the boon he had procured for them, they conferred upon him, with great solemnity, supreme and permanent sovereignty over themselves.

One can hardly find, in all antiquity, a similar example of absolute power thus bestowed upon a prince, and of a quiet, peaceful transformation of a republic into a monarchy like that carried into effect by the people of Judæa at that time. The deed which endorsed the gift of the monarchy to Simon is kept in a record, which places strikingly before us the gratitude felt towards the Hasmonæans by the newly-constituted nation.

On the 28th Elul (September) of the year 140, the third year of Simon's tenure of the high-priesthood, many members of the priesthood, the elders and representatives of the nation, and all the people of Jerusalem were assembled, probably upon the Mount of the Temple, and there agreed, in recognition of the great services ren-

dered by Simon and the Hasmonæans to the people and the Sanctuary, to consider him and his descendants as their leader (Nassi) and High Priest, until such time as a prophet should arise. As the insignia of his dignity Simon was to wear a purple mantle with a golden clasp. In his name all deeds were to be published; peace and war were to be decided upon by him; the functionaries he appointed over the country were allowed to garrison fortresses, the Temple and all its sacred accessories were to be under his sole care. Whoever opposed him was liable to punishment.

This decree of the people, engraven on brass tablets, appeared in a conspicuous position on the columns in the outer court of the Temple, and was likewise placed among the archives preserved in that building. In spite of their antipathy to the customs of the neighbouring Greeks, the Judæans had learned from them the art of immortalising their deeds in stone and metal. Unlike the Greeks, however, they were not capricious in the honours and favours they granted. Those to whom statues had been erected one day, would not be bespattered with mud the next, but on the contrary would live for ever in the grateful hearts of their countrymen. Israel had now again a prince lawfully chosen by the people, after they had been deprived of a ruler ever since the captivity of Zedekiah, for a space of nine jubilees. If the nation did not give Simon the title of king, but only that of prince, it was not in any way to lessen his power, but so that they might remain faithful to the house of David. According to the views held at that time in Judæa, it was only a descendant of David who could be king, he being also the expected Messiah. The deed which gave the sovereign power to Simon contained the proviso that he should only retain it until the appearance of the true prophet Elijah, who would be the precursor of the Messiah.

It was only after Simon had been formally recognised as ruler that he made use of the right granted him by Antiochus Sidetes to coin money. This was the first time that Judæan coins had been cast. On one side the value of the coin and the following inscription were stamped: Shekel of Israel; on the other the words Holy Jerusalem (Jerushalaim ha-kedosha), the date being indicated by an abbreviation. Emblems of the high priesthood of Israel were used as devices for the coins; upon one side was engraven a flowering branch (Aaron's); upon the other a sort of cup, probably representing a vessel for incense. But Simon's name or dignity, his title of prince or high priest, did not appear on them. The letters used in the inscriptions were old Hebrew or Samaritan; the old Hebrew characters being familiar to the nations around, whilst they would have been unable to decipher the new ones. The dates we find on the coins of Simon begin from the fourth year of his reign, for it was not till some years after he had assumed the regal powers (about 139) that he commenced coining money.

Friendly as Antiochus Sidetes had shown himself towards Simon whilst he had but little hope of defeating the usurper Tryphon, his demeanour completely changed as soon as, by the help of the Judæans, he had nearly attained his aim, and he became as cold as he had previously been gracious and well disposed. To avoid the appearance of ingratitude by his subsequent conduct, Antiochus sent back the two thousand troops as well as the money with which Simon had supplied him for the siege of the town of Dora (139). The Syrian king despatched his general Cendebæus to Simon to reproach him for having overstepped the limits of independence granted to him, and with having taken the Syrian possessions of Joppa, Gazara and the Acra in Jerusalem, without paying for them the

stipulated compensation. He therefore called upon Simon to restore those places or to pay a thousand talents of silver. Simon replied that he had only recovered the former inheritance of his fathers. For Joppa and Gazara he was ready, however, to give a hundred talents, but if the dispute could not be settled by friendly means, then the sword must decide.

Whilst Antiochus himself pursued Tryphon who had escaped from the fortress of Dora, he sent troops of infantry and cavalry under the general Cendebæus the Hyrcanian to invade Judæa, and bring the whole country again under the Syrian rule. Simon prepared for a hard struggle. Fortunately he could assemble a considerable army, 20,000 men, and he was able to raise regiments of cavalry, whose absence on former occasions had been so disastrous to Judæa. Simon being too old to take an active part in the war, named as his generals his two sons, Jochanan (John) and Judah, who marched out of Gazara against the enemy. In the meantime Cendebæus had penetrated into the country as far as Ekron, plundering the inhabitants and carrying away captive those who dwelt in the lowlands. On a plain situated between Ekron (which Cendebæus fortified) and Modin, a battle was fought and gained by the Judæans. Cendebæus and his army were defeated and pursued to Azotus, which town having offered resistance was destroyed by fire. Jochanan, to whom the successful campaign was chiefly due, received in commemoration of his victory over the Hyrcanians, the name Hyrcanus. This was the last war which took place in Simon's time (137-136), and it inspired him with confidence in the capacity of his sons not only to uphold, but to increase the power and greatness of Judæa. Antiochus was still more embittered against Simon by the defeat his arms had suffered, but, too weak to attempt a new attack, he now had

recourse to stratagem, and hoped by a cunning plot to sweep from his path the whole family of the Hasmonæans, the obstinate and successful foes of his house. To accomplish this aim he strove to awaken the ambition and avarice of one who, being Simon's son-in-law, might easily find opportunities for committing the wished for crime. This shameless man, Ptolemy ben Chabub, was not held in check either by gratitude or the ties of family affection, nor did feelings of reverence for one grown old in deeds of heroism or the love of his country restrain him. With his daughter's hand Simon had given him riches and had made him governor of Jericho and the surrounding district, but the ambitious spirit of his son-in-law remained unsatisfied, and he was eager to seize upon the inheritance of Judæa, and with the help of the foreigner to rule in the kingdom. It was easy for Ptolemy to carry out the villainous design he had conceived, for the most vigilant and farseeing mind could hardly have suspected so base an act. In spite of Simon's great age it was his custom to visit all parts of the country, in order to make himself acquainted with the wants of the people and the manner in which the laws were administered. During one of these journeys he came to the fortress of Dok, near Jericho, where his son-in-law resided. He was accompanied by his wife and his two younger sons, Judah and Mattathias, but the elder one, John, had remained at his post at Gazara.

Ptolemy proffered friendly hospitality to the victims he meant to sacrifice; he prepared a splendid banquet for them, and whilst they were enjoying themselves at the feast, Ptolemy and his satellites fell upon and massacred Simon and his sons (Shebat, February, 135).

As soon as the crime had been committed, the murderer sent messengers to the Syrian king to

ask for troops to assist him in his ambitious designs. He also despatched soldiers to Gazara to assassinate John, and to Jerusalem to take possession of the city and the Temple. But Ptolemy was not to reap the expected reward of his treachery. A friend who had managed to escape from the fortress of Dok, hurried to Gazara and warned John of the impending danger, and as soon as the assassins reached the city they received the punishment due to their crime. John was likewise successful in reaching Jerusalem before Ptolemy, and had little difficulty in persuading the people to stand by him. The expected help from Antiochus also failed, doubtless because that king was engaged in warlike operations elsewhere, so that Ptolemy was obliged to shut himself up in his own fortress. Here he kept his mother-in-law imprisoned as a hostage, and prepared to defend himself against the attacks which would probably be made upon him.

Thus perished Simon, the last of the Hasmonæan brothers, not one of whom died a natural death, one and all having lost their lives in the service of their country and their faith. Judah and Eleazer were killed upon the field of battle, whilst John, Jonathan, and Simon, less fortunate than their brothers, succumbed to the cruel treachery of the enemies of their people.

END OF VOL. I.

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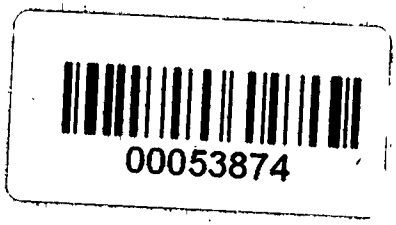
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